



Texas Persimmon

Diospyros texana

Texas persimmon, also called Mexican or black persimmon, is normally a shrub or small tree less than 15 feet tall. However, some specimens along the upper Texas coast may reach 50 feet tall. The compact wood is almost black, and the gray, slick bark is thin.

The oval leaves, rounded at the tips, have small, fine hairs on the lower surface. The fruit contains three to eight seeds, can measure up to 1 inch in diameter and is green, turning to black when ripe.

Distribution and habitat

Texas persimmon is primarily found in the western two thirds of the state in rocky open woodlands, arroyos and on open slopes. In some pastures in central Texas, it may be one of the predominant invading woody species. Regions: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

Toxic agent

The toxic agent in persimmon is unknown, and the information in this section is based on observation rather than experimental studies.

During periods of drought, there have been years when the persimmon crop was heavy and grass was sparse. Cattle consuming large amounts of ripe or ripening fruit have had problems.

Livestock signs

Persimmon poisoning does not cause death, but it does result in poor performance. The clinical signs are:

- Black diarrhea
- Colic
- Weight loss

At times, the level of intake is so great that persimmon seeds are about the only solid material in the feces.

Integrated management strategies

Cattle regain their weight when given adequate nutrition after the fruit is gone. As this usually occurs in drought, expensive supplemental feeding can be required.

Prevention is best and can be accomplished by moving cattle to pastures with fewer plants when the fruit begins to ripen.

Individual plants of Texas persimmon may be controlled with a basal stem treatment mixture containing 25 percent Remedy® and 75 percent diesel fuel oil to thin out heavily infested pastures. Apply the mixture to the bottom 12 inches of the stem down to the soil surface in the spring after the leaves mature but before June 15.

