

# Virginia Piedmont Common Poisonous Plants

What evil lurks in your  
pasture?

A stylized silhouette of a mountain range in a darker shade of teal, located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

# Systems affected by bad plants

Sudden death

Wilted Wild Cherry

Cardiovascular System

Milkweed and Yew

Red or Swamp Maples

Digestive System

Pokeweed

Oak trees and acorns

Liver and Skin

Senecio and Fall Panic Grass

Nervous System

Sudan and Johnson Grass

Musculoskeletal System

Black Walnut

# Senecio

- ◆ Tansy ragwort, groundsel
- ◆ Causes liver damage
- ◆ Photosensitivity
- ◆ Neurologic signs
- ◆ Usually chronic ingestion
  - Signs develop over time

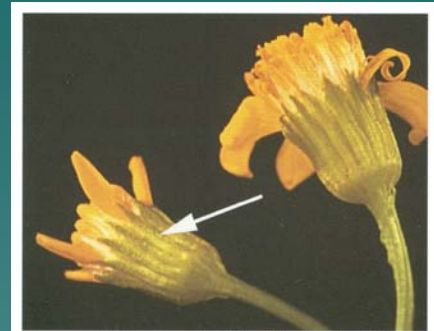


Figure 4-9A Senecio showing typical bract formation (*Senecio* spp.).



# Panic Grass

*Panicum spp*

- ◆ Grows 1 to 3 ft tall
- ◆ Damages the liver
- ◆ Usually chronic ingestion of plant
- ◆ Difficult to eradicate
- ◆ Looks like Johnson grass



# Wild Cherry

*Prunus serotina*

- ◆ Flowers arranged in long racemes



# Wild Cherry

*Prunus serotina*

Mature trees grow to 30 ft or more, also grows as shrub

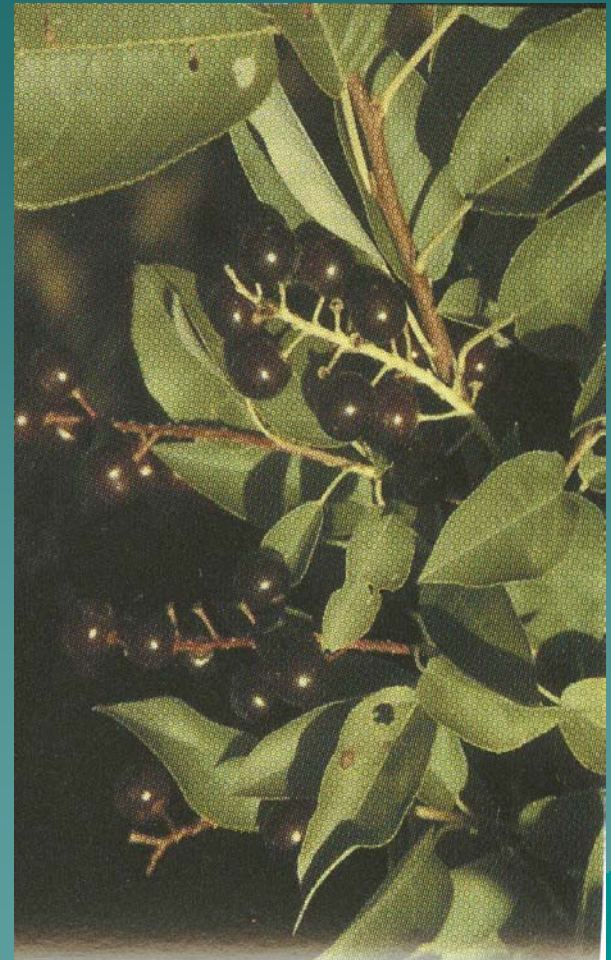
Wilted leaves and new twigs  
highest cyanide levels

Can cause sudden death

Cyanide prevents blood from  
releasing oxygen to the tissues

Signs of respiratory distress and  
cherry red venous blood

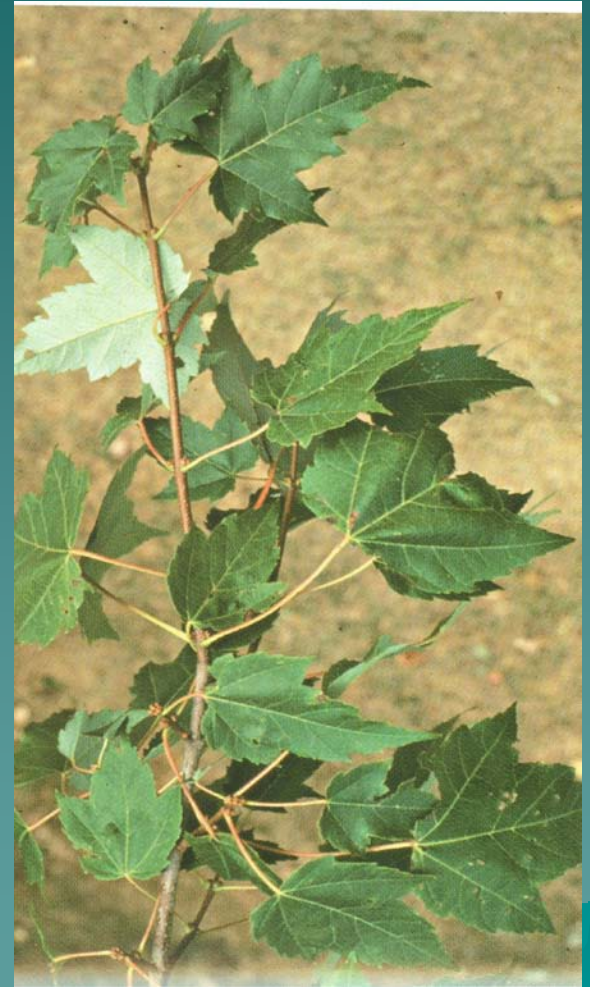
Remove trees during winter, the  
bark is also poisonous.



# Red or Swamp Maple

*Acer rubrum*

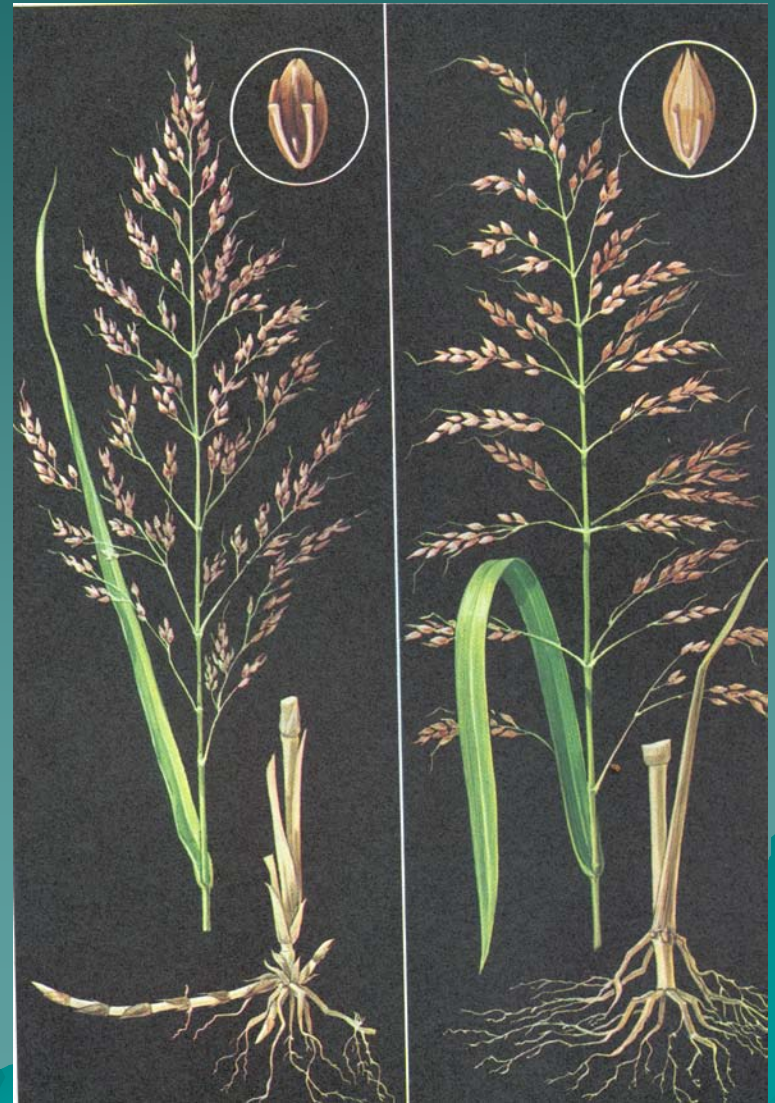
- ◆ Common native tree
- ◆ Grows to 100 ft
- ◆ Dry leaves toxic
- ◆ Causes damage to red blood cells leading to anemia
- ◆ Rapid death



# Johnson and Sudan Grass

*Sorghum halepense*

- ◆ Similar in appearance to Panic Grass
- ◆ Cyanide poisoning in young shoots, or stressed plants
- ◆ Signs of ataxia and bladder paralysis
- ◆ Improvement of syndrome possible if not too severe



# Oak trees and Acorns

*Quercus spp.*

- ◆ Native tall trees
- ◆ Young leaves and green acorns most toxic
- ◆ Affect GI tract and kidneys
- ◆ Stop eating and drinking, dark feces, painful



# Black Walnut

*Juglans nigra*

- ◆ Native tree growing to 60ft.
- ◆ Causes laminitis when horses come in contact with shavings
- ◆ Does not need to be ingested
- ◆ Prompt removal and treatment for laminitis can lead to complete recovery



# References

- ◆ [http://ohioline.osu.edu/b762/b762\\_24.html](http://ohioline.osu.edu/b762/b762_24.html) Ohio State U Extension Horse Nutrition Bulletin contains concise information on several toxic pasture plants, pictures, signs of poisoning in horses, etc.
- ◆ <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/php/plants.php?action=faqs&num=320> Cornell U Dept of Animal Science list of plants poisonous to Livestock. Pictures, answers some questions.
- ◆ <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=G4970> List of poisonous plants, line drawings, habitat, poisonous parts and symptoms. Very concise
- Knight, A. P., and Walter, R. G. (2001). A Guide to Plant Poisoning of Animals in North America, pp. 1-367. Teton NewMedia, Jackson WY.