

Chokecherry

Prunus virginiana

Common Names: Bitter berry, chokecherry, Virginia bird cherry, western chokecherry, black chokecherry

Species Affected: Cattle, Sheep

Toxin: Hydrogen cyanide

Description:

Chokecherry is a perennial, meaning that it lives for more than 2 years. They can grow as a shrub or a tree, ranging from 4ft to 20ft in height. Chokecherry flowers are white and grow in clusters. The leaves are glossy and dark green in color, fruit ranges from a dark purple to a black.

Growing Location and Timing :

Chokecherry likes areas with good soil moisture, on hillsides or areas with sloping topography. It can be found in mountain streams growing in patches of hardwoods, competition with these hardwoods stunts its growth. Early spring is when chokecherry begins growing, elevation determines its growth rate.

Affects on Livestock:

Chokecherry contains hydrocyanic acids within its leaves, this can hinder the animal's ability to breath. If an animal consumes roughly 0.25% of its body weight in leaves (within 30-60 minutes) it can be fatal.

Signs and Symptoms:

Symptoms can be gasping, rapid breathing, salivating, muscle twitching, convulsions that may cause a coma. Blood clots may occur, as well as bloating and contents of the rumen may have an almond odor. Other symptoms are small hemorrhages in the throat and lungs.

Preventative Measures:

Do not allow livestock in areas where there is an abundance of chokecherry with little to no other foraging vegetation. Livestock that are poisoned by chokecherry should be injected with a mixture of 20 ml of a 10% solution of sodium thiosulfate and 10 ml of a 10% solution of sodium nitrate, either intraperitoneally or intravenously. Make sure to consult a veterinarian before taking such measures as they may have different procedures for you to follow.



[CHOKECHERRY - PRUNUS VIRGINIANA | The UFOR Nursery & Lab \(umn.edu\)](#)

