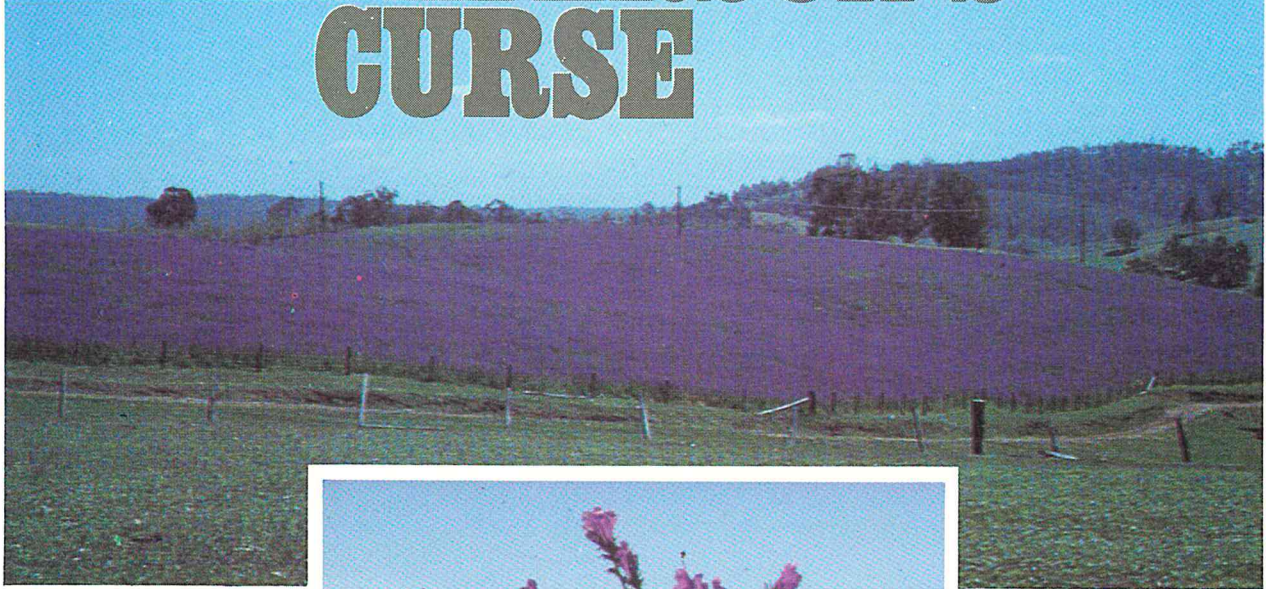
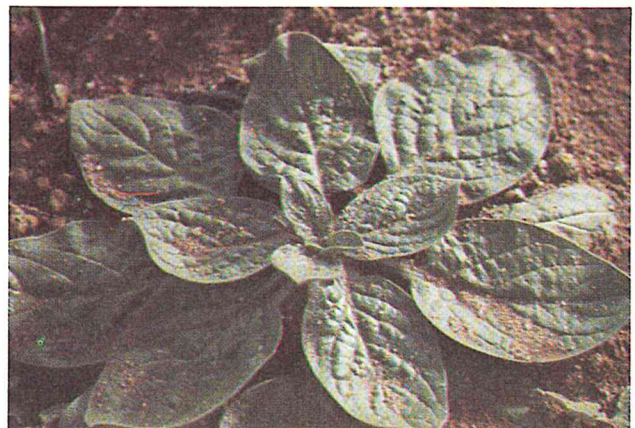


Agriculture Protection Board  
 Advisory Leaflet No. 25  
 September 1977  
 Agdex No. 647  
 103701/7/77-7,500-L/2597

# PATERSON'S CURSE



**P**aterson's curse is an important pasture weed, particularly in higher rainfall areas, where it can grow very densely and provide severe competition to recognised pasture species such as sub-clover. Paterson's curse is generally regarded as non-poisonous, though it has been suspected of causing liver damage. In cattle areas the stiff bristles on all parts of the plant can irritate cows' udders. Paterson's curse is not normally a problem in crops because it is controlled by soil preparation prior to seeding. On sheep land, Paterson's curse is a weed of undergrazed pasture. Increasing the stocking rate will considerably reduce the number of Paterson's curse plants. Cattle are not so effective in controlling Paterson's curse because they do not exert the required grazing pressure.



Paterson's curse was probably introduced into eastern Australia during the 1860's and subsequently into Western Australia as a garden plant. Paterson's curse is a Declared Plant (noxious weed) in Western Australia.

**Description:** Paterson's curse is usually an annual plant, but sometimes it lives for two years. It forms a large, flat rosette of leaves up to 30 cm across during the winter. Usually several branched central flowering stems, up to one metre high develop in spring. The stems are covered with stout bristles. Flowering begins in spring and continues into early summer. Paterson's curse has numerous bright purple flowers. Each flower produces four brown or grey rough, wrinkled seeds, surrounded by a husk which is covered with stiff bristles. Paterson's curse reproduces only by seed. Seeds are spread by movement of stock and

*(continued overleaf)*

*TOP: A heavy infestation of Paterson's curse. MIDDLE: Paterson's curse in flower. ABOVE: rosette.*

# **PATERSON'S CURSE**

*(continued)*

fodder.

Control of Paterson's curse depends on preventing the formation of new seed until the

supply of dormant seed has been exhausted. Seed can remain dormant in the soil for at least five years. Prompt action should be taken to eradicate isolated

patches of Paterson's curse to prevent the weed getting established in new areas. *For information on Paterson's curse control, contact the Agriculture*

*Protection Board: Telephone Perth 67 0111 or any country office of the Agriculture Protection Board or Department of Agriculture.*