

## AFRICAN RUE



1. Flowering plant
  2. Plant showing roots and rhizome.
  3. Flower.
  4. Leaves.
  5. Infestation
- (Photos: C. Ray Alcock)

*(continued overleaf)*

# AFRICAN RUE

African rue, (*Peganum harmala*) is a "declared plant" in Western Australia. It may not be introduced to the state. Any plants found must be destroyed by the owner of the land on which they are found.

African rue is a member of the Zygophyllaceae family which includes Caltrop. It is a native of the Mediterranean region from Spain to North Africa and as far east as India. It has become naturalized in North America, parts of New South Wales and South Australia.

The seeds and young leaves appear to be poisonous. No

stock deaths have been reported from Australia, however, there are reports of cattle deaths from the southern United States. It is eaten only sparingly by sheep and ignored by cattle and rabbits.

African rue competes strongly with other useful pasture species.

African rue has not yet been found in WA. In South Australia it is a declared Pest Plant. It was first recorded there in 1943 and may have been introduced earlier in camel harness. It has spread to cover 400 square kilometres on three

pastoral stations and small infestations have been found elsewhere.

## Ecology

African rue is a vigorous summer-growing shrubby plant with a perennial root system. It is very drought hardy.

It reproduces from seeds and by suckering from the extensive root system.

## Description

African rue is a shrub with stiff branched stems, from 15 to 60 cm high. It has deeply divided bright green succulent leaves arranged alternately on the stems. It

has white flowers about 2.5 cm in diameter born singly amongst the leaves. These develop into fruits consisting of a three chambered capsule opening at the top. Each chamber contains many seeds.

It is important to prevent the establishment of African rue in Western Australia.

**For further information on African rue identification and control, contact the Agriculture Protection Board, Baron-Hay Court, South Perth 6151, telephone (09) 368 3333, or the nearest country office of the APB or Department of Agriculture.**