

White snakeroot



The leaves of white snakeroot are opposite, have serrated margins and are broadly ovate. The plant is a perennial that grows back each spring with woody, erect stems that are pubescent towards their base. The plant contains a substance, known as tremetol that is toxic to livestock. However, livestock are not likely to feed on the plant if other forages are available as it is distasteful.



Flowers are white and occur in clusters. Thanks to Aaron Hoefler and Wesley Tucker, University Outreach and Extension Regional Specialists, for contributing photos to this page.



Seed. Seed are dark gray with visible ridges and a distinct white, hairy pappus about the same length of the seed. Length of the seed unit is approximately 2.0 to 2.5 mm.

Life cycle: perennial.

Toxic Plant: the leaves and stems are the most poisonous; roots have lower toxicity. The toxic component is tremetol and the toxic dose of the green plant is 1 to 10 percent of the animal's body weight. The onset of signs ranges from two days to three weeks, with depression, stiff gait, muscle tremors, trembling, partial throat paralysis, jaundice, passage of hard feces and prostration. Death may be sudden with no prior signs of toxicity. Because tremetol is excreted in the milk, nursing animals will be affected by the toxin.