

A little about the Datura Species – AKA Olieboom



The Datura plant is commonly known as "Olieboom".

Datura, commonly known as 'Thorn apple' or 'Olieboom', is a very common weed in most crop producing regions of South Africa. It drives us all mad and they never seem to stop emerging. This weed can be an absolute curse to control and can have severe negative impacts on your crop if left unmanaged.

Datura can grow to a height of 1,5 m and is often found growing in big clusters in and around your lands. It is distinctly identifiable by its fruit which is a round pod or capsule covered in thorns. When the fruit reaches maturity these pods split open to release hundreds of small black kidney shaped seeds. Unfortunately for farmers these pods are usually splitting open at the exact time that the combines are starting to run up and down the fields during harvest time.

The plants have a smooth thick stem and produce irregularly shaped leaves. The flowers are white or pale purple. These weeds are designed to be robust and resilient which is why they are very difficult to control. The fact that they spread hundreds of seeds which germinate very easily also does not help the problem. The seeds are deep germinating, which means that they need to be submerged in a layer of moist soil to germinate. This is why we notice the weed growing especially vigorously in conventionally tilled lands.



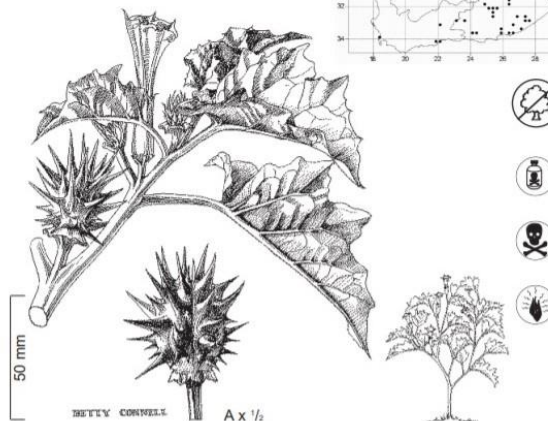
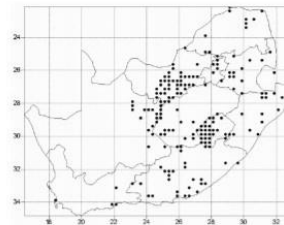


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***Datura ferox* L.**

large thorn apple
grootstinkblaar

Family Solanaceae



Terrestrial herbs

Description: Erect, subherbaceous annual up to 1.5 m high; stems sparsely hairy to glabrous, pale green. **Leaves:** Dark green above, paler below, ovate, up to 200 mm long, on long petioles; sparsely hairy, margins coarsely and irregularly toothed or lobed, veins prominent, bad-smelling. **Flowers:** White, solitary, narrowly funnel-shaped, up to 65 mm long, October–March. **Fruits:** Brown, hardened capsules (**A**) ± erect, ovoid, up to 70 mm long x 60 mm wide, covered with stout, spreading spines up to 30 mm long. **Invades:** Wasteland, cultivated lands, roadsides, riverbanks, riverbeds. **Origin:** Probably tropical America. **Invasive status:** Rural, areal and special effect weed.

Datura species are herbaceous, leafy annuals and short-lived perennials which can reach up to 2 m in height. The leaves are alternate, 10–20 cm long and 5–18 cm broad, with a lobed or toothed margin. The flowers are erect or spreading (not pendulous like those of *Brugmansia*), trumpet-shaped, 5–20 cm long and 4–12 cm broad at the mouth; colors vary from white to yellow, pink, and pale purple. The fruit is a spiny capsule 4–10 cm long and 2–6 cm broad, splitting open when ripe to release the numerous seeds. The seeds disperse freely over pastures, fields and even wasteland locations.

Datura belongs to the classic "witches' weeds", along with deadly nightshade, henbane, and mandrake. Most parts of the plants are toxic, and datura has a long history of use for causing delirious states and death. It was well known as an essential ingredient of potions and witches' brews.^[6]

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