



Toxic Plants For Pets

by Kent County Master Gardener and Veterinarian

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Spring arrives and we are so excited to see our plants waking from their winter slumber. Many of us are planning new additions to our flower and vegetable gardens. This is also a time when our pets may spend more time outside. The possibility of pets getting into poisonous plants increases. Luckily, most outdoor plants are not that attractive to our pets. But those that are, can lead to a very bad – even deadly – experience. Even some vegetables and fruits that we regularly eat can be deadly to our pets.

Some of us have houseplants year-round. My advice is to



Kent County Master Gardener Photo

Cyclamen a popular house plant.

consider them all poisonous. The only safe indoor plant is a hanging basket that is inaccessible to both dogs and cats. Even a pet that has never taken an interest, may one day decide to chew up a plant. Also, consider anything that you may use on your plant, i.e., insect spray, fertilizer, etc. may be toxic. During special occasions, we may receive plants that can be poisonous. Also, consider ALL plants with bulbs dangerous. They have killed many cats and are poisonous to dogs. Outdoors, all plants with bulbs are potentially poisonous to pets. Examples include: daffodils, tulips, gladiola, iris, hyacinth, crocus and lilies. We all want to encourage Monarchs but make sure your pets cannot access

Plants With Toxic Properties

Some of the more common plants that have toxic properties are listed here. This is by NO means an exhaustive list: Amaryllis, Anemone, Asparagus Fern, Begonia, Bleeding Heart, Caladium, Calla Lily, Castor Bean (deadly seeds), Chrysanthemum, Coleus, Cyclamen, Delphinium, Gardenia, Geranium, Gladiola, Hosta, Holly, Hydrangea, Lace Flower, Monkshood, Morning Glory, Oleander, Periwinkle, Primrose, Rhododendron, Sago Palm, Star of Bethlehem, Sweet Pea, Wisteria, Yarrow, Yew.

Herbs: Borage, Chamomile, Lavender, Lovage, Parsley, Tarragon.

Vegetables: Rhubarb, Tomato leaves, Allium family (Onions, Garlic, Chives, Ramps, Leeks, Scallions, etc.), raw Potato, Sweet Potato and plants, Corn on the Cob (not toxic but could cause a severe blockage).

Fruits: Grapes, Raisins, Avocados, Macadamia nuts, pits of any fruit (Peach, Plum, Persimmon, Cherry, etc.), Fig leaves, Apples, Melons, Oranges are okay as long as the seeds are removed.

Miscellaneous: Hops, Marijuana, Tobacco.

milkweed because it can be very deadly to pets. Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*) can be very toxic causing heart failure. Consider all mushrooms toxic!

The important thing to remember is that not all parts of each plant are toxic. Certain plants are only toxic during certain times of their growing and/or dying back cycle. If your pet ingests part of an outdoor plant, try to get a piece of the plant if you are not totally familiar with its identity. Call your veterinarian or animal control BEFORE your pet starts showing signs. If you are familiar with the plant chewed or ingested, you can do a search on a reliable site listed below. DO NOT induce vomiting until you know what you are dealing with. Some plants can cause more damage to the esophagus if they are regurgitated. If you can (without injury to yourself) clear the pet's mouth of the material. Stay calm since many plants do no harm if ingested in small amounts. If your pet is already showing signs of poisoning, go immediately to your veterinarian or emergency center. The good news is that most dogs and many cats are not that interested in these potentially toxic plants. Unfortunately, some of us have pets that just don't obey the rules! It is important to keep an eye on your pets and keep them restrained in a safe area so they do not get into trouble. Some pet health plans have a free poison control help line which will save you money in an emergency. This is a good benefit to have for your pet.

Beside plants, we must be cautious about the chemicals we use. Always follow instructions on herbicides, fertilizers and pesticides. Many require a period of avoidance after application. Of course, always keep these products away from your pets. It is amazing what our four-legged friends can get into.

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Poison Control for Pets

ASPCA POISON CONTROL:
888-426-4435

www.aspsa.org

www.petmd.com

Questions

For questions on this subject or any gardening topic call the Master Gardener Helpline: In New Castle County, (302) 831-8862; in Kent County, (302) 730-4000; and in Sussex County, (302) 856-2585 x 535. The Master Gardeners monitor the Helpline in the winter but it may take a few days to get back to you.



For more information about Master Gardener workshops, garden helplines, presentations, becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer, or other activities, please visit these websites.

UD Website - <https://www.udel.edu/academics/colleges/canr/cooperative-extension/environmental-stewardship/master-gardeners/>

DSU Website- <https://cast.desu.edu/cooperative-extension/agriculture-natural-resources/delaware-master-gardeners>

