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Poisonous Plants in California
By Timothy White
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

Most of us know that all parts of the reliable landscape oleander plant are poisonous, but did you know that there are almost 400 additional common California plants that are also poisonous?

Plants are considered poisonous if they cause some type of negative reaction from exposure to that plant. Poisonous plants are ranked, based on their “toxicity class.”

Class 1 plants - if ingested may cause serious illness or death.

Class 2 plants - if ingested may cause vomiting or diarrhea.

Class 3 plants - can irritate the skin, mouth, tongue, or throat.

Class 4 plants - if the thorn, sap, or juice comes in contact with your skin, may cause skin rashes or irritation.

In all cases, we can choose to make common sense choices to diminish adverse reactions in our everyday gardening, such as wearing gloves, long sleeved shirts and long pants, and never tasting or sampling any part of any plant unless we have identified the plant and have assured ourselves that it is safe to consume.

It is important to identify the plants in our gardens so that we can convey that information to doctors or in a phone call to the national *Poison Control Center* at 800-222-1222. Since treatment depends on what is ingested or encountered, it is not enough to say, “it is a 3-foot shrub with shiny green leaves!”

Class 1 plants (Major Toxicity) include the seeds of apples, apricots, black cherries, peaches and pears, rhubarb leaves, Angel’s trumpet (*Brugmansia*), azalea, lantana, lupine, mistletoe, toyon, and vinca.

Class 2 plants (Minor Toxicity) include arborvitae, bird of paradise, broom (*Cytisus* and *Genista*), chrysanthemum, daffodil (including narcissus and jonquil) bulbs, daisy, Dutch iris, gladiolus, hyacinth, iris, mistletoe, oak tree acorns, ornamental sweet allium, and yarrow (*Achillea*).

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Class 3 plants (Oxalates) are plants where the juice or sap contain needle-shaped oxalate crystals, which can irritate the skin, mouth, tongue or throat, resulting in throat swelling, breathing difficulties, burning pain, and stomach upset. Plants in this category include begonia, Chinese evergreen, Iceland poppy, jack-in-the-pulpit, calla lily, split-leaf philodendron, and rhubarb leaves.

Class 4 plants (Dermatitis) include achillea (yarrow), agapanthus (lily-of-the-nile), alstroemeria, amaryllis, baby's breath, Bermuda grass, bougainvillea thorns, carnation, Carolina jasmine, clematis, cyclamen, daisy, dogwood, flax, fleabane, hyacinth, hollyhock, lobelia, poison oak, primrose, smoke bush and tansy.

You may notice some plants appear in more than one category. Not everybody will have the same reaction to some plants and some plants cause multiple miseries! If humans can have negative reactions from ingesting or touching toxic plants, dogs and cats can as well, so contact your veterinarian if you suspect your pet has done so.

For many more links to research on this subject, visit ucanr.edu and type "safe and poisonous garden plants" in the search field. Or download Poisonous Plants, ANR Publication 8560 at <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8560.pdf>. In addition to extensive lists of common toxic and non-toxic plants, we learn that some plants used for "natural" teas and herbal remedies can be harmful. Of course, children and pets will often chew on anything. We should also never try mushrooms growing in the wild, unless we are absolutely sure it's safe!!

On February 23rd we will be hosting a ***Sustainable Organic Gardening*** Workshop, at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, Cameron Park, 95682. ***Sustainable Organic Gardening*** will help you develop a backyard food source that's cost-effective, improves your family's nutrition and food security, and offers a healthy hobby for the whole family. Whether you have a patio container garden or a quarter acre to farm, you can grow an abundance of healthy, delicious food through sustainable organic gardening practices. There is a fee for this one-day workshop, lunch included, \$25.00. To learn more and to pre-register, please visit our website <http://ucanr.edu/sustainable-organic-gardening> or call (530)-621-5528.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. Visit us at the Sherwood Demonstration Garden, located at 6699 Campus Drive in Placerville, behind Folsom Lake College – El Dorado Center. The garden is open on the second Saturday of each month, 9:00 a.m. to noon, till April 2019.

For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. You can also find us on Facebook.