

## Poisonous Plants and Pets

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Many of the plants we grow in our yards are toxic to dogs and cats. Some can be fatal, but many cause nonfatal - but annoying - symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea and drooling. Because of dogs' indiscriminate eating and chewing habits, they are much more commonly poisoned than cats. For lots of good information on poisonous plants, see the ASPCA website, <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/>.

If you suspect that your dog or cat has eaten or chewed on a poison plant, first call your vet to find out if it is ok to induce vomiting. If it is ok, and if your pet is conscious and alert, follow these directions:

1. Give about one tablespoon of 3% hydrogen peroxide per 15 pounds of body weight. For the average cat or toy breed dog, use one half to one tablespoon. For medium sized dogs such as a Springer Spaniel, the dosage is four tablespoons. Large dogs, like Labs or German Shepherds, can be dosed with five to six tablespoons.
2. Repeat in 10 minutes if the pet does not vomit.
3. Identify the plant, or take it to your vet, if possible.
4. If the pet ate a pesticide, bring the container to the vet.
5. Take the pet to your vet ASAP. There are very good drugs that reliably cause vomiting in 5 minutes.

The following plants can present serious poisoning issues:

1. Sago and Cardboard Palms: Cycads and Zamias cause liver failure in dogs; they are extremely potent, and all parts of the plant are poisonous. Once a dog shows signs of liver failure, the mortality rate is 30%. For some reason, many dogs like to chew on Sago Palms.
2. Lilies of all kinds: Crocus, Asiatic, Oriental, Tiger, Easter and Hyacinth, Tulips, Aloe and Daylilies. Agapanthus (Lily of the Nile) is not poisonous. Lilies are extremely potent and cause acute kidney failure in cats; few cats survive. Lilies will cause vomiting and diarrhea in dogs, but not kidney damage.
3. Castor beans and plants contain ricin, the deadliest plant toxin known to man. The dried beans are sometimes used as decorative beads in jewelry, and small children are especially at risk.
4. Buckeye pollen is toxic to bees, and the plant and nuts are toxic to dogs and livestock. They cause vomiting and diarrhea and affect the central nervous system.
5. Oleander is very poisonous; it causes heart problems and is mostly a problem for livestock.

6. Foxglove is the original source of digitalis, a drug that is used in tiny amounts for heart failure, but it is very toxic if overdosed.
7. *Convalaria*, Lily of the Valley, is also cardio-toxic.
8. Rhubarb leaves and Portulaca can cause kidney damage.
9. Nicotiana contains nicotine; it can cause vomiting and affects the central nervous system.
10. Vinca rosea also causes vomiting and diarrhea and affects the central nervous system.
11. Sweet Pea, *Lathyrus latifolius*, can be a problem for livestock.
12. Azaleas and Rhododendrons are toxic and usually only a problem for sheep and goats.
13. Daffodils, especially the bulbs, are toxic.
14. Rudbeckia is toxic to livestock in large amounts, but it tastes bad.
15. Yellow star thistle is toxic to horses if they eat 50-200% of their body weight in 2-3 months. It is only a problem if there is insufficient healthy forage available.
16. Cocoa mulch may be attractive to dogs and is toxic; it causes vomiting and diarrhea, lethargy, fast heart rate and tremors. Some are labeled as safe for pets and have toxins removed.
17. Grapes may be toxic to dogs, cats and ferrets, but many pets that eat grapes are not affected. Those that are affected show signs of kidney damage a few hours after ingestion. The principle toxic is unknown.

Most plants that are toxic to livestock are not consumed in large enough quantities to cause poisoning unless the animal doesn't have enough safe forage. There are many plants not listed here that are considered mildly toxic, meaning they may cause mouth and stomach irritation, (drooling, vomiting and diarrhea), but are not generally fatal. Nevertheless, no list can cover all potentially poisonous plants. If you suspect your pet has consumed a poisonous plant or is sick, call your vet to be safe.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome. The office is located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at [http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC\\_Master\\_Gardeners/](http://ucanr.edu/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/). Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at <http://ucanr.edu/mgenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.

Saturday, July 7<sup>th</sup>, Master Gardeners will present a free three-hour class on "Water Efficient Gardening". The class starts at 9:00 a.m. When this article went to press, the class location information was not available. Please check the website or call the Master Gardener Office for the class site.