

What All Owners Should Know About Poisonous Plants



This is a partial list of poisonous indoor and outdoor plants that may be lurking in your home or yard and harmful to your pooch. As pretty as they may be, you should be on the alert!

One of the first things a dog owner should look at is just how high of a risk these plants are to your dog. Consider your dog's age. Is he a puppy or full grown adult? Many if not most puppies make their way through the world by exploring and investigating everything orally. In other words, they love to chew, chew, chew. Most puppies grow out of this stage as they mature and stop teething. When they are outside, watch carefully to see if they are drawn to sticks, flowers or tree leaves.

Another risk factor is your dog's penchant for plant chewing. Some dogs are just naturally drawn to plant leaves and flowers, regardless of their age, while others virtually ignore them. You know your dog best- you are the best judge of potential chewing problems. Many toxic plants rarely pose a threat because the majority of dogs don't chew on

them, even if they are commonly found in their environment. So the age and tendencies of your dog play a great role in their safety.



Keep in mind also that dogs will have varying reactions to different plants, trees and shrubs. Some will cause only a mild rash or itchiness, while contact with others result in more severe irritations such as facial and throat pain and

swelling. This can turn fatal if the airway becomes blocked. Still other plants (though not as common) are extremely toxic and can quickly cause death from even the smallest exposure to them.

Toxic effects of plants, however, vary greatly between species and can change according to the status of a plant's health. Several important factors should be considered here. These include the time of year it is, the stage of a plant's growth, the condition of growth (is the plant healthy and thriving, barely alive, dormant?), humidity, the age of a plant, and many other issues. Time of year is very significant; it can actually make all the difference in the toxicity of a plant. The level and concentration of poisons in a plant can easily change not only from year to year, but throughout the growing seasons. Environmental factors play a vital role throughout the year. There are just so many things to think about!

Unfortunately if your dog has been exposed to and poisoned by a plant, diagnosis can be difficult to pinpoint. The best way to verify diagnosis of toxic plant ingestion is often to find a specific plant physically present in the area your dog was. You need to properly identify the plant, and then prove that the dog ingested it. Look for leaves or twigs that have been chewed on or near the plant itself, or collect stool or vomit samples and look for fragments there. Always bring anything you find with you to the veterinarian.

Antibiotics available cannot cure plant poisoning. Usually the best thing to do is help quicken the elimination of the plant from the

gastrointestinal tract. The vet can tell you whether you should induce vomiting. Symptomatic and supportive care follows once the poison leaves the dog's system. This should all be done under a veterinarian's care. If you've discovered the source of the poison remove the dangerous plant from your property to prevent recurrence.

Here is a little information about poisonous plants. Plants are also the source of many medications. The active compound in Foxglove is Digitalis purpurea, which is a heart medication. If a dog ingests too much of the plant's leaves it can have cardiac effects.

Other plants that are important to look at are: Rhubarb-symptoms include staggering, trembling, breathing difficulty, weakness, diarrhea, increased drinking and urinating, and death; Pokeweed/inkberry-colic, diarrhea, blood in stool and possible death; Pigweed, Redroot-trouble breathing, trembling, weakness, coma, and death; Nightshade-severe intestinal disturbances, diarrhea, drowsiness, numbness, dilated pupils, trembling, labored breathing, nasal discharge, rapid heartbeat, weak pulse, lack of coordination, paralysis, or severe shaking, of the rear legs, rapid heart rate, bloat and can be fatal; Dieffenbachia – mouth irritation, stomach upset, asphyxiation, tremors, seizures and death can occur; Azaleas – stomach irritation, abdominal pain, abnormal heart rate and rhythm, convulsions, coma, sometimes death. Others that can cause death include Hemlock, Jimsonweed, Johnsongrass, English Yew and Castor Beans.

If you are landscaping, a nursery can help you to choose plants that are not poisonous to dogs. If you have moved, the web sites below have pictures so you can compare the plants in your new yard. If you suspect your dog has ingested a poisonous plant call the ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center at (888)4ANIHELP or (800)548-2423. Be prepared to pay a consulting fee. Or visit their website for more information.

Additional Sources of Information

[*Texas A&M List of Toxic Plants*](#)

Cost:Free

[*Cornell University poisonous plants home page*](#)

Cost: Free

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center: List of Toxic Plants

Phone: 1-(888)-4AN-IHELP

Cost: \$44 per case (Visa, Mastercard, Discover or American Express. The center will do as many follow-up calls as necessary and at the owners request will contact their veterinarian.

Pet Emergency first Aid Videos

Phone: 1-888-380-9966

Email: order@apogeevideo.com

Cost: First Aid for Dogs (\$19.95), First Aid for Cats (\$19/95), Combo: Dogs and Cats (\$34.95)

POISONOUS OUTDOOR PLANTS

Common Name	Botanical Name	Poisonous Part
Apricot	Prunus Ameniaca	Stem, Bark, Seed Pits
Azalea	Rhododendron Occidentale	All Parts
Baneberry	Actaea Spicata	Berries, roots, foliage
Buchberry	Lantana	All parts
Castor Bean	Ricinus Communis	Seeds, if chewed
Choke Cherry	Prunus virginica	Leaves, seed pits, stems, bark
Daffodil	Narcissus	Bulbs
Daphne	Daphne Mezereum	Berries, bark, leaves
Foxglove	Digitalis purpurea	Leaves, seeds, flowers
Hemlock	Conium maculatum	All parts, root and root stalk
Hens- and- Chicks	Lantana	All parts
Hyacinth	Hyacinthus orientalis	Bulbs, leaves, flowers
Hydrangea	Hydrangea macrophylla	Leaves, Buds
Jerusalem Cherry	Solanum pseudocapsicum	All parts, unripe fruit
Jimson Weed	Datura Stramonium	All parts
Jonquil	Narcissus	Bulbs
Lilly-of-the-	Convallaria Majalis	All parts

valley

Mandrake	Podophyllum peltatum	Roots, foliage, unripe fruit
Mistletoe	Phoradendron Favescens	Berries
Morning Glory	Ipomoea violaces	Seeds
Nightshade	Atropa belladonna	All parts
Oleander	Norium oleander	All parts, including dried leaves
Poinsettia	Euphorbia pulcherrima	Leaves, Flowers
Pokeweed, Inkberry	Phytolacca Americana	All parts
Red Sage	Lantana Camara	Green berries
Rhododendron	Rhododendron	All parts
Rhubarb	Rheum raponticum	Leaves
Sweet Pea	Lathyrus Odoratus	Seeds, pods
Tulip	Tulipa	Bulbs
Wisteria	Wisteria	Seeds, pods
Yew	Taxus	Needles, bark, seeds
