

Pets and Plants: Advice for our Green-Thumbed Pet Lovers

Submitted by the not-so-green-thumbed Dr. Megan Varner

Now that April showers have been plentiful and May flowers are hopefully on the way, what do you need to be mindful of in regards to pet safety with your plants? Surely you do not want your pet to kill your plants by eating them, and VICE VERSA! There are several that may cause sickness, ranging from belly upset to seizures, if ingested by your pet. Here are some to watch out for:

1. **Lilies:** any member of the *Lilium* species (i.e. Tiger lilies, Easter lilies) can be very harmful to your cat if ingested. Even very small amounts may cause kidney damage, and even kidney failure.
2. **Tulip:** Bulbs contain poison that disturbs the gastrointestinal tract, leading to vomiting or diarrhea. The pet may also exhibit drooling, anorexia, neurological depression, seizures, and cardiac trouble.
3. **Rhododendron/Azalea:** toxins from these plants can cause vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness, and depression the central nervous system. Severe poisoning can even lead to coma and death.
4. **Oleander:** this plant affects the cardiac system. Glycosides in any part of the plant may cause arrhythmias, gastrointestinal tract irritation, hypothermia and potentially death.
5. **Castor Bean:** toxins can cause abdominal pain, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, thirst, weakness, anorexia. Severe dehydration, seizures or coma can lead to death.
6. **Yew:** the *Taxus* species contains toxins that may cause neurological trouble such as trembles, ataxia, and respiratory distress. Gastrointestinal trouble and heart trouble can also occur.
7. **Amaryllis:** this is a common Easter-time garden plant. It may cause vomiting, depression, diarrhea, abdominal cramping, anorexia, or tremors.
8. **Chrysanthemum:** Pyrethrins in this family of plants can cause gastrointestinal upset if ingested in large amounts.
9. **English Ivy:** gastrointestinal disease is predominant.
10. **Peace Lily:** calcium oxalate crystals in this plant can cause irritation and burning of the mouth, vomiting, and difficulty swallowing.

More plants to be careful of with your pets: Rhubarb, Daffodils, Dumbcane, Sago Palm, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Skunk Cabbage, Milkweed, Rosary Pea, Poinsettia, St Johnswort, Iris, Daphne, Onions and Chives, Foxglove, Lily-of-the-Valley, Mistletoe, Poppy, Delphinium, Nightshade, Marijuana

More information may be found at www.ASPCA.org and Pet poison hotline: 1-800-213-6680 or www.petpoisonhelpline.com (Fee may be charged for this service).