

Plants and Dogs

By Brenda Howard

Wouldn't you think dogs and cats would have instinctive avoidance of plants and substances that are harmful or poisonous to them? Well, they don't! If your dogs are like mine, they will ignore a houseplant for years and then one day out of the blue decide to try a big ole' bite of it! Because animals can be curious (kids too!) and take a taste of the many things in their environment, it's a good idea to try to eliminate poisonous plants.

Pet Safe House Plants:

African Daisy
 African Violet
 Aluminum Plant
 Baby's tears
 Bamboo, Golden
 Bird of Paradise
 Bird's Nest Fern
 Boston Fern
 Camellia
 Cast Iron Plant
 Christmas cactus
 Coleus
 Corn Plant
 Donkey's Tail
 Dracaena
 Easter Lily
 Echeveria
 Figs, Weeping and Fiddleleaf**
 Geraniums
 Goldfish Plant
 Impatiens
 Jade Plant
 Japanese Aralia
 Kalanchoe
 Lipstick Plant
 Maidenhair Fern
 Nerve Plant
 Orchids
 Norfolk Island Pine
 Palms - *Most are nontoxic except fishtail palm*
 Peperomia
 Piggyback Plant **
 Poinsettia **
 Prayer Plant
 Purple Passion Plant
 Sensitive Plant
 Spider Plant
 Surinam cherry
 Swedish Ivy
 Wandering Jew
 Wax
 Zebra

** Sap may be irritating

Pet Safe Garden Plants:

Annuals
 Zinnia
 Snapdragons
 Cosmos
 Calendula
 Petunia
 Bee Balm
 Phlox
 Roses
 Catmint/catnip
 Coneflowers
 Primrose
 Butterfly flower
 Spider flower
 Nasturtium
 Columbine
 Coral Bells
 Turf Lilly
 Goat's Beard
 Begonia
 Impatiens
 New Guinea Impatiens
 Violet
 Coleus
 Hosta
 Bugbane
 Yellow Corydalis
 Astilbe
 Queen of the Meadow

Most vegetable plants aren't poisonous for pets with a few exceptions. Onions, chives and garlic, which many pets like, contain compounds that can cause anemia. The leafy part of potato plants, and the green part of potato skin contain compounds that are toxic if eaten in sufficient quantities. Fruit seeds and pits also contain toxic chemicals. Apple, plum, cherry, apricot and peach seeds and pits contain cyanide, which can cause fatal seizures.

Regarding insecticides, fertilizers and other gardening chemicals always carefully read the warnings and product use instructions for information that is important to your safety and your pets.

A particular type of mulch has received media attention this summer because it is potentially lethal to dogs. This product is made of cocoa bean shells and is a popular choice for many gardeners because it eventually decomposes to organic fertilizer. Many dogs find the sweet smell irresistible and will eat large quantities. The dangerous chemical found in the mulch is the same chemical found in chocolate – theobromine. Many dogs like the taste of cedar chips – which can be toxic too.

Keep the ASPCA's Animal Poison Control Center phone number handy in case of an emergency. The center is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. A consultation fee of \$60 may be charged per incidence, but can be well worth the money. The phone number is 1-888-426-4435.

Other sources of information regarding poisons and toxins harmful to pets include:

Texas A&M List of Toxic Plants – <http://www.aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu>

Texas Poison Control – 1-800-222-1222

Brenda Howard has been training dogs for over 20 years and is a member of The Association of Pet Dog Trainers, The American Bloodhound Club, The Basset Hound Club of America and The Pet Care Services Association (formerly the ABKA).

The information presented here is not intended to substitute for the advice and care of a veterinarian. Please consult your veterinarian regarding all issues relating to your dog's health.

6/30/08



