

Keeping your pet healthy around plants and flowers

The great outdoors is teeming with beauty—and poisons for your pet. To protect your furry family member, know which plants and flowers are toxic, the symptoms of plant toxicity, and where to get help immediately if your pet has ingested a plant or flower.

Toxic plants and flowers



Lilies (*Lilium & Hemerocallis* spp)

Common plant(s): Day lily, Easter lily, tiger lily, rubrum lily, oriental lily, Asiatic lily, stargazer lily.

Animal(s) of concern: Cats.

System(s) affected: Kidneys.

Toxic amount: Small amounts—1–2 leaves/petals, pollen, vase water.

Clinical signs: Lethargy, not eating, vomiting, dehydration, kidney pain, not producing urine.

Onset of signs: 6–12 hours.



Sago palms and others

Common plant(s): Sago palm, Florida arrowroot, cardboard palm, zamia palm.

Animal(s) of concern: Dogs primarily; cats and horses.

System(s) affected: Liver, stomach and intestines.

Toxic amount: Depends on plant part; the seeds (nuts) are most toxic and 1–2 can be fatal.

Clinical signs: Vomiting, bloody diarrhea, dehydration, jaundice, abdominal pain, liver failure.

Onset of signs: 15 minutes to 3 days.



Cardiac glycosides

Common plant(s): Foxglove, lily of the valley, kalanchoe, mother of millions, oleander.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

System(s) affected: Heart, stomach and intestines.

Toxic amount: Small amounts—1–2 leaves/petals, a few seeds, vase water.

Clinical signs: Heartbeat that is too slow/too fast, abnormally low blood pressure, drooling, vomiting, dilated pupils, shaking, seizures.

Onset of signs: 30–120 minutes.



Yew (*Taxus* spp.)

Common plant(s): Japanese yew, English yew, Chinese yew.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

System(s) affected: Heart, stomach and intestines.

Toxic amount: Several leaves, bark, seeds. Minimum lethal dose in dogs is 2.3 g leaves/kg body weight.

Clinical signs: Heartbeat that is too slow, abnormally low blood pressure, cardiac arrest, vomiting, diarrhea, tremors, sudden death.

Onset of signs: Rapid.



Rhubarb leaves and others

Common plant(s): Sour starfruit, shamrock plant, garden rhubarb leaves, purple shamrock, wood sorrel and many others.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

System(s) affected: Stomach and intestines primarily; kidneys, nerves and muscles secondarily.

Toxic amount: Generally, a large ingestion is necessary for poisoning to occur. With garden rhubarb, only the leaves are toxic.

Clinical signs: Drooling, not eating, vomiting (+/- blood), diarrhea (+/- blood); depression, tremors, muscle cramps in large ingestions due to low calcium; excessive thirst, excessive urination, not urinating at all.

Onset of signs: 24–36 hours.



Dieffenbachia and others

Common plant(s): Dumb cane, pothos, sweetheart vine, umbrella plant, peace lily.

Animal(s) of concern: All (especially indoor cats and dogs).

System(s) affected: Stomach and intestines; rarely breathing (upper airway swelling/obstruction).

Toxic amount: Leaves and stems primarily; mild to moderate toxicity. Typically, small ingestions produce no or minimal signs except for Dieffenbachia (dumb cane), which has caused death in pets.

Clinical signs: Drooling, excessive swallowing, swelling in the back of the mouth (with rare upper airway obstruction) and vomiting; light sensitivity and swelling may occur with exposure to eyes.

Onset of signs: Rapid.



Azalea and others

Common plant(s): Mountain laurel, laurel, Japanese pieris, azalea, rhododendron, rosebay.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

Target organ(s): Stomach and intestines, heart, nervous system.

Toxic amount: Very small—just a few leaves or flowers, even the nectar.

Clinical signs: Drooling, vomiting (+/- blood), diarrhea, heartbeat that is too slow/too fast, arrhythmias, abnormally low blood pressure; tremors, seizures and transient blindness rarely occur.

Onset of signs: 1–12 hours.



Spring bulbs

Common plant(s): Spring crocus, amaryllis, resurrection lily, hyacinth, narcissus, daffodil, jonquil, tulip.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

Target organ: Stomach and intestines; sometimes heart and brain.

Toxic amount: Toxins are most concentrated in the bulbs and even small ingestions may cause signs. Ingestion of leaves and flowers typically result in less severe signs.

Clinical signs: Drooling, vomiting (+/- blood), diarrhea, foreign body obstruction; heartbeat that is too fast, sometimes cardiac arrhythmias and seizures.

Onset of signs: Varies, but often rapid.



Marijuana

Common plant(s): pot, weed, grass, Mary Jane.

Animal(s) of concern: All.

System(s) affected: Stomach and intestines; nervous system; sometimes heart.

Toxic amount: Varies depending on route of exposure and dryness of the plant (dried is more toxic). In general, this plant is of low toxicity but massive ingestions may cause severe signs or death.

Clinical signs: Vomiting, weakness, unable to walk, depression or agitation, dilated pupils, heartbeat is too slow, body temperature is too high/too low, tremors and seizures.

Onset of signs: Minutes to 12 hours depending on whether inhaled or eaten.



Yesterday, today and tomorrow

Common plant(s): Yesterday, today and tomorrow; kiss me quick; noon and night; lady of the night.

Animal(s) of concern: All (especially dogs).

System(s) affected: Brain, stomach and intestines; heart.

Toxic amount: Unknown, assumed to be relatively small.

Clinical signs: Vomiting and agitation followed by muscle tremors and seizures; sometimes low blood pressure and heartbeat that is too slow; seizures may persist for several days.

Onset of signs: Minutes to several hours.