

The five plants most hazardous to your pets health

In recognition of National Poison Prevention Week, March 20 through 26, the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) is educating owners about the five plants most potentially dangerous to pets. "We typically recommend that pets not be allowed to eat plants in general," says APCC veterinary toxicologist Dr. Safdar Khan. "However, it is especially critical that the following plants be kept out of reach of animals, as they have the potential to cause serious, even fatal systemic effects when ingested."

- LILIES rank number one in dangerous plant call volume at the APCC, and are highly toxic to cats. Says Khan, "It is clear that even with ingestions of very small amounts, severe kidney damage could result." An owner in Pennsylvania lost her cat to kidney failure from ingesting only a small portion of an Easter lily.
- AZALEAS, indigenous to many eastern and western states and commonly used in landscaping, contain substances that can produce vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, weakness, and central nervous system depression. Severe cases could lead to death from cardiovascular collapse.
- Frequently used as an ornamental plant, OLEANDER contains toxic components that can cause irritation of the gastrointestinal tract, hypothermia, and potentially severe cardiac problems.
- Also a popular ornamental plant, SAGO PALM can potentially produce vomiting, diarrhea, depression, seizures, liver failure, and even death. One pit bull terrier in Florida became ill and subsequently died from liver failure after chewing on the leaves and base of a sago palm in his yard.
- Although all parts of the CASTOR BEAN plant are dangerous, the seeds contain the highest concentration of toxins. Ingestion can produce significant abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, and weakness; in severe cases, dehydration, tremors, seizures, and even death could result.

For more on these dangerous plants, please visit ASPCA online. If you suspect that your pet may have consumed one of these or any other potentially toxic substance please contact your veterinarian or the APCC's 24-hour hotline at (888) 426-4435.