

# Poisonous Plants

Symptoms of plant toxicity or poisoning can include some or all:

- Low energy
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Blood in the poo
- Drinking/peeing more
- Pale gums
- Twitching
- Tremors/seizures (fits)
- Struggling to breathe
- Collapse
- Drooling
- Eating less/not eating

Highly toxic plants include:

- **Lilies (*Lilium* species) in cats:** All parts of the lily can be highly toxic to cats, and can lead to kidney damage, which sadly can be fatal. If you think your cat may have licked or eaten a lily – including if your cat has been grooming their fur after they've been in contact with lily pollen – it's essential to contact your vet **immediately** for help.
- **Mushrooms/ Fungi** (Many species): There are many species of fungi in the UK and only some are toxic. Many types will cause irritation to the guts with diarrhoea and vomiting, but some can lead to serious or fatal problems, such as arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms), fits or organ failure. As identifying the different types of mushrooms can be difficult, it's best to avoid them completely to make sure your pet doesn't accidentally eat a toxic variety.
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*): This plant can cause serious problems in both pets and humans. The stems and leaves of the plant contain toxins that can lead to skin burns and blisters, and the toxin is further concentrated in the sap which is released when the plant is damaged or broken. Although pets often have some protection from their fur, hairless or thin furred areas (such as the ears, mouth and belly) can be affected. If the sap is licked off the coat or goes into the eyes, it can cause even more damage. It's important to contact your vet if you think your pet has come into contact with Giant Hogweed. If you're worried about yourself, or someone you know, contact your doctor or **the NHS** for help.

Poisonous plants in spring - Plants to avoid:

- **Azalea/Rhododendron** (*Rhododendron* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Crocuses** (*Crocus* Sp)
- **Daffodil** (*Narcissus* species)
- **Cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*): Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Geranium** (*Pelargonium* species)

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- **Heavenly bamboo** (*Nandina domestica*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Holly** (*Ilex* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter
- **Horse chestnut** (*Aesculus hippocastanum*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Hyacinth** (*Hyacinthus orientalis*)
- **Iris and gladioli** (*Iridaceae*)
- **Ivy** (*Hedera*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Laburnum** (*Cytisus alpinus*): Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Laurel** including Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and other laurels: Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Mistletoe** (*Viscum album*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Oak** (*Quercus pedunculata*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Onions and garlic plants** (*Allium* species): All parts of the plant, especially the bulbs, can be toxic. Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Ragwort** (*Senecio jacobaea*): Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Rhubarb** (*Rheum rhabarbarum*): Also present in summer.
- **Rowan** (*Sorbus aucuparia*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Snowdrops** (*Galanthus* species): Also present in winter
- **Tulip** (*Tulipa* species)
- **Yew** (*Taxus baccata* and related species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.

## Poisonous plants in summer - Plants to avoid:

- **Autumn crocus** (*Colchicum autumnale*)
- **Azalea/Rhododendron** (*Rhododendron* species): Also present in autumn and winter.
- **Cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster* species): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*)
- **Geranium** (*Pelargonium* species): Also present in spring.
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*): Also present in spring and autumn.
- **Grape vines** (*Vitis vinifera*): Grapes can be highly toxic to dogs. Also found in autumn.
- **Heavenly bamboo** (*Nandina domestica*): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Holly** (*Ilex* species): Also present in spring, autumn and winter
- **Horse chestnut** (*Aesculus hippocastanum*): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea* species): Also present in spring and autumn.
- **Ivy** (*Hedera* species): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Laburnum** (*Cytisus alpinus*): Also present in spring and autumn.
- **Laurel** (including Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and other laurels): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Lilies** (*Lilium* species)
- **Larkspur** (*Delphinium* species)
- **Lily of the valley** (*Convallaria majalis*)
- **Mistletoe** (*Viscum album*): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Nightshade** (*Atropa belladonna*, *Solanum dulcamara* and related species)
- **Oak** (*Quercus pedunculata*): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.

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- **Oleander** (*Nerium oleander*): Also present in autumn.
- **Potato plant** (*Solanum tuberosum*): The leaves on potatoes can be toxic. Raw, green or sprouting potatoes can also be harmful.
- **Ragwort** (*Senecio jacobaea*): Also present in spring and autumn.
- **Rowan** (*Sorbus aucuparia*): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.
- **Rhubarb** (*Rheum rhabarbarum*): Rhubarb leaves are poisonous to dogs and cats, whether they are cooked or raw. Also present in spring.
- **Tomato** (*Solanum lycopersicum*): Leaves and unripe fruit on tomato plants are toxic to cats and dogs.
- **Yew** (*Taxus baccata* and related species): Also present in spring, autumn and winter.

## Poisonous plants in autumn - Plants to avoid:

- **Amaryllis** (*Hippeastrum* species): Also present in winter.
- **Autumn crocus** (*Colchicum autumnale*)
- **Azalea/Rhododendron** (*Rhododendron* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Chrysanthemum** (*Chrysanthemum*)
- **Cotoneaster** (*Cotoneaster* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*): Also present in spring and summer.
- **Grape vines** (*Vitis vinifera*): Grapes can be highly toxic to dogs. Also found in summer.
- **Heavenly bamboo** (*Nandina domestica*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Holly** (*Ilex* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Horse chestnut** (*Aesculus hippocastanum*): Look out for chestnuts in autumn which can cause stomach problems or a gut blockage. Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea* species): Also present in spring and summer.
- **Ivy** (*Hedera* species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Laburnum** (*Cytisus alpinus*): Also present in spring and summer.
- **Laurel** (including Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and other laurels): Also present in spring, summer and winter.
- **Mistletoe** (*Viscum album*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Mushrooms/fungi** (Many species)
- **Oak** (*Quercus pedunculata*): Look out for acorns from Oak trees during the autumn which can cause stomach problems or a gut blockage. Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Oleander** (*Nerium oleander*): Also present in summer.
- **Onions and garlic plants** (*Allium* species): All parts of the plant, especially the bulbs, can be toxic. Also present in spring and summer.
- **Ragwort** (*Senecio jacobaea*): Also present in spring and summer.
- **Rowan** (*Sorbus aucuparia*): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Yew** (*Taxus baccata* and related species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.

## Poisonous plants in winter - Plants to avoid:

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- **Azalea/Rhododendron** (Rhododendron species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Amaryllis** (Hippeastrum species): Also present in autumn.
- **Cotoneaster** (Cotoneaster species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Heavenly bamboo** (Nandina domestica): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Holly** (Ilex species): Take care to avoid berries in the winter. Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Horse chestnut** (Aesculus hippocastanum): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Ivy** (Hedera species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Laurel** (including Cherry Laurel (Prunus laurocerasus) and other laurel species): Also present in spring, summer and autumn.
- **Mistletoe** (Viscum album): Take care to avoid berries in the winter. Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Oak** (Quercus pedunculata): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Poinsettia** (Euphorbia pulcherrima)
- **Rowan** (Sorbus aucuparia): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.
- **Snowdrops** (Galanthus): Also present in spring.
- **Yew** (Taxus baccata and related species): Also present in summer, autumn and winter.

## Plants to avoid:

- **Aloe** (Aloe vera)
- **Amaryllis** (Hippeastrum species): Also present in autumn.
- **Dumbcane** (Dieffenbachia species)
- **Cordyline** (Cordyline australis and related species)
- **Dracaena** (Dracaena fragrans and related species)
- **Ivy** (Hedera species)
- **Lilies** (Lilium species)
- **Peace lily** (Spathiphyllum)
- **Poinsettia** (Euphorbia pulcherrima)
- **Philodendron** (Philodendron scandens and related species)
- **Sago palm** (Cycas revoluta)
- **Yucca** (Yucca species)

## Hidden plant poisons and hazards

It's not just poisonous plants that we need to be cautious of – grass seeds, pesticides, weed killer and compost bins can be just as hazardous for our pets.

**Grass seeds** can be a hidden hazard, as they can become lodged in your pet's skin, ears or eyes, and can move through the body's tissues causing serious inflammation or infection.

It's also important to remember that pesticides or weed killer on plants can be toxic – even if the plant itself is safe. It's always best to avoid using pesticides or weed killers in your

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garden. Monitor your pet closely if you're out and about, to check they're not encountering anything that could be dangerous.

Don't forget that compost bins and piles of leaves or grass cuttings can contain harmful bacteria and mould, so it's important to make sure you're clearing your garden waste into a secure bin that's out of paws reach.

*(PDSA: Poisonous Plants. Available at <https://www.pdsa.org.uk/pet-help-and-advice/looking-after-your-pet/all-pets/poisonous-plants>).*