



Toxic Plants for Alpacas & Llamas

In Georgia, alpacas and llamas can be exposed to various toxic plants that can harm their health if consumed. While alpacas and llamas are generally more selective about what they eat compared to other livestock, they may still accidentally consume harmful plants if they are present in their environment. Below is a list of toxic plants in Georgia that can be dangerous for alpacas and llamas:

1. Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant.
- **Symptoms:** Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, irregular heartbeats, and death.
- **Notes:** Oleander is highly toxic and even small amounts can cause severe poisoning in alpacas and llamas. It's commonly found in ornamental gardens.

2. Rhododendron/Azalea (*Rhododendron spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, flowers.
- **Symptoms:** Drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, and in severe cases, death.
- **Notes:** Rhododendron and azaleas are attractive to animals, but they are extremely toxic if ingested, causing gastrointestinal upset and potentially fatal effects.

3. Yew (*Taxus spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant except the red berries.
- **Symptoms:** Tremors, weakness, difficulty breathing, and heart failure.
- **Notes:** Yew contains taxine alkaloids, which are toxic to alpacas and llamas, leading to heart issues and potentially death.

4. Nightshade (*Solanum spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** Berries, leaves, and stems.
- **Symptoms:** Diarrhea, vomiting, lethargy, paralysis, and death.
- **Notes:** Nightshade species are toxic due to the presence of solanine, which can cause serious gastrointestinal and neurological symptoms.

5. Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially the flowers.
- **Symptoms:** Heart arrhythmias, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, and death.

- **Notes:** Foxglove contains compounds that interfere with heart function, and ingestion can lead to fatal heart conditions.

6. Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant.
- **Symptoms:** Tremors, salivation, pupil dilation, difficulty breathing, and death.
- **Notes:** Hemlock is highly toxic to all livestock, including alpacas and llamas, causing severe neurological damage.

7. Cherry (*Prunus spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, seeds, and stems (particularly when wilted).
- **Symptoms:** Drooling, difficulty breathing, dilated pupils, and death.
- **Notes:** The leaves and seeds of cherry trees contain cyanogenic compounds, which can be fatal to alpacas and llamas if ingested.

8. Larkspur (*Delphinium spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially when young.
- **Symptoms:** Muscle tremors, weakness, gastrointestinal distress, and death.
- **Notes:** Larkspur can be particularly dangerous in the spring when it is actively growing.

9. Tansy Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially when dried.
- **Symptoms:** Liver damage, weight loss, jaundice, and death.
- **Notes:** This plant contains alkaloids that are toxic to the liver and can lead to long-term damage and death if consumed over time.

10. Milkweed (*Asclepias spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially the milky sap.
- **Symptoms:** Vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, and death.
- **Notes:** The milky sap in milkweed contains toxic compounds that can affect the heart and central nervous system.

11. Sweet Clover (*Melilotus spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** The plant, particularly when moldy or spoiled.
- **Symptoms:** Bleeding, swelling, jaundice, and death.
- **Notes:** Moldy sweet clover can contain dicoumarol, a compound that interferes with blood clotting and causes internal bleeding.

12. Buttercup (*Ranunculus spp.*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially when fresh.
- **Symptoms:** Drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, and skin irritation.

- **Notes:** Although usually not deadly in small amounts, buttercups can cause gastrointestinal issues and irritation to the skin if consumed.

13. Azaleas (*Rhododendron* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, flowers, and stems.
- **Symptoms:** Vomiting, drooling, diarrhea, lethargy, and death.
- **Notes:** Azaleas are often part of ornamental plantings, and even small amounts can be fatal.

14. Cyanide-producing plants (like Wild Cherries and Plum Trees)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, seeds, and stems.
- **Symptoms:** Difficulty breathing, excessive salivation, weakness, and death.
- **Notes:** Many species of cherries, including wild varieties, can contain cyanogenic glycosides, which release cyanide when consumed.

15. Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant.
- **Symptoms:** Weakness, incoordination, and death after prolonged exposure.
- **Notes:** Bracken fern is toxic when consumed over time, especially in large quantities. It can cause damage to the digestive system and liver.

Prevention:

- **Monitor Grazing:** Regularly check pastures for the presence of toxic plants and remove them to prevent accidental ingestion.
- **Fencing:** If toxic plants are prevalent in your area, use fencing to restrict access to areas where these plants are growing.
- **Supplementary Feed:** Make sure your alpacas and llamas have access to adequate hay or pasture that meets their nutritional needs, so they are less likely to forage on potentially harmful plants.
- **Regular Checks:** Conduct regular checks of your pasture and surrounding area to spot potentially harmful plants before they become a problem.

Emergency Action:

If you suspect your alpacas or llamas have ingested toxic plants, contact a veterinarian immediately. The quicker the intervention, the better the chances for treatment and recovery.

By being vigilant and proactive about identifying and removing toxic plants, you can help protect the health and well-being of your alpacas and llamas.