



Toxic Plants for Goats & Sheep

In Georgia, several plants are toxic to goats and sheep. It's important to be aware of these plants to ensure the safety of your livestock. Here are some common toxic plants for goats and sheep found in Georgia:

1. Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant.
- **Symptoms:** Drooling, diarrhea, lethargy, heart arrhythmias, death.
- **Notes:** Oleander is highly toxic, and even small amounts can be fatal. It's often used as an ornamental shrub in landscaping.

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

- **Toxic Part:** All parts, especially leaves and flowers.
- **Symptoms:** Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, drooling, collapse.
- **Notes:** These plants are commonly found in Georgia gardens and are highly toxic to goats and sheep.

3. Yew (*Taxus* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts, except for the fleshy red berries.
- **Symptoms:** Tremors, weakness, difficulty breathing, death.
- **Notes:** Yew trees are commonly used in landscaping, and ingestion of even small amounts can be fatal.

4. Nightshade (*Solanum* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** Berries, leaves, and stems.
- **Symptoms:** Vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, convulsions, and in severe cases, death.
- **Notes:** Nightshade species, like black nightshade, are toxic to goats and sheep if ingested.

5. Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, especially after a frost.
- **Symptoms:** Lethargy, lack of coordination, muscle tremors, and in severe cases, death.
- **Notes:** This plant can be toxic when it has been damaged by frost or drought. It contains cyanogenic glycosides, which can release cyanide when consumed.

6. Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, particularly the flowers.
- **Symptoms:** Heart arrhythmias, drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, and death.
- **Notes:** Foxglove contains digitalis, which can cause heart problems in goats and sheep.

7. Larkspur (*Delphinium* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, especially when it's young.
- **Symptoms:** Muscle tremors, weakness, and in severe cases, death.
- **Notes:** Larkspur is highly toxic in the spring when it's actively growing and goats or sheep may be attracted to it due to its attractive flowers.

8. Hemlock (*Conium maculatum*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant.
- **Symptoms:** Tremors, salivation, pupil dilation, difficulty breathing, and death.
- **Notes:** Hemlock is highly toxic and should be avoided by livestock.

9. Cherry (*Prunus* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** Leaves, seeds, and stems.
- **Symptoms:** Drooling, difficulty breathing, dilated pupils, and death.
- **Notes:** The leaves and seeds of cherry trees contain cyanogenic compounds that can be toxic.

10. Tansy Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts of the plant, particularly when dried.
- **Symptoms:** Liver damage, weight loss, jaundice, and death.
- **Notes:** This plant contains alkaloids that can cause liver damage, and animals may continue to eat it even when it's dried.

11. Milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.)

- **Toxic Part:** All parts, especially the milky sap.
- **Symptoms:** Diarrhea, vomiting, muscle weakness, and death.
- **Notes:** Milkweed is toxic when consumed in large amounts, especially to young livestock.

12. 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, which interferes with blood clotting and causes internal bleeding.

13. Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp.)

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

- **Notes:** Although not usually deadly in small quantities, buttercups can cause gastrointestinal upset and skin issues.

Preventive Measures:

- **Monitor Pasture:** Regularly check for the presence of these toxic plants in pastures and remove them if found.
- **Fencing:** If possible, fence off areas where toxic plants are present.
- **Supplemental Feeding:** Ensure that your goats and sheep have access to adequate, nutritious feed to reduce their temptation to forage on potentially harmful plants.

Emergency Action:

If you suspect your goats or sheep have ingested any toxic plants, contact a veterinarian immediately for guidance and treatment. 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.