

Pets and Poisonous Plants, Fruits and Veggies

Many of these plants are in households now or will be sometime in the future. Just because they are in this list doesn't mean you should get rid of them. Most of these plants must be ingested to cause problems, but as we all know – our pets' behavior can be unpredictable. Whether you actually remove these plants from your home and yard are up to you, but watch your pets around them. Be especially diligent about cleaning up any plant debris like fallen leaves, flowers or trimmings.

Here are just a few common plants to watch your pets around:

Grapes and Raisin – These tasty treats to humans but deadly to dogs have been in the news this past year and even making the rounds of the internet. It is not known why they are so toxic to dogs so keep them away from Fido. They may cause diarrhea, vomiting and in some cases kidney failure.

Lilies – These beauties arrive in many lovely floral arrangements. They are only a danger if eaten – so keep kitties away or place them out of reach. Ingesting even small amounts can cause kidney damage in cats. Dogs can also get sick leading to vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, depression of the central nervous system, and, in rare cases, death.

Lantana – This tough low-growing plant produces little green berries after it flowers. It is the berries that are poisonous to pets.

Macadamia nuts – MMMM, one of my favorite nuts – but definitely not so good for my pooch, Annie. Just a small handful of these nuts will upset the dog's digestive tract and muscles, setting off weakness and paralysis. Good news here – these symptoms last about 48 hours and will go away whether or not you see a vet.

Oleanders – This may be one of the well-known poisonous plants in Arizona but it bears mentioning again. Humans are told to wear gloves and long sleeves when trimming and cleaning around oleanders because it can cause skin irritation. If your pet has allergies you may worry about their skin, too. However, this plant needs to be ingested in some manner to cause real harm. Dogs who chew on sticks or falling leaves in an animal's water can cause a problem. Often it is upset stomach, heart failure, excitability or lethargy. There is a story of a horse dying from drinking the water which had oleander leaves in it. So please be careful around this plant.

Onions & Garlic – Whew – besides the breath odor from too much garlic, the sulfur compounds in these veggies can cause gastronomic upset and harm the

red blood cells. This one is sneaky because if your pet eats any food made with lots of onion or garlic, they can get ill. So watch them around the trash or leftovers. A pot roast marinated in garlic and onion, or chopped liver with garlic, can cause a bout of diarrhea and a trip to the vet!

Poinsettia –I am sure your mother told you to watch your kids and pets around this one. Your pet will get an upset stomach and an mouth irritation if they eat this plant.

Note: Contact your veterinarian immediately if you think your pet has ingested any of the following plants. This does not represent a complete list of all poisonous plants. Also, your pet may have a sensitivity or allergy to a plant that is not on the list, resulting in toxicity.

About the Author:

Doreen Pollack is the Garden Goddess and owner of Down 2 Earth Gardens,LLC, providing garden consultations and coaching. Join her for free gardening tips at monthly What to Do in Your Garden this Month workshops. To find a workshop near you, visit www.down2earthgardens.com or call 623.217.6038.

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