



Plants Can Be Poisonous !

Cats like to chew on grass in order to regurgitate hairballs. This habit gets cats into trouble! Many outdoor plants and houseplants are poisonous, even in small quantities. Indoors, cats will readily substitute a houseplant for grass. Outdoors they may unwittingly choose poisonous plants that should be removed from your garden.

Typical symptoms of poisoning may include:

- Abdominal Pain
- Convulsions
- Depression
- Diarrhea
- Dilated Pupils
- Elevated Heart Rate
- Imbalance
- Muscular Tremor
- Not Eating
- Pale or Yellow Conjunctiva
- Rapid Breathing
- Red Urine
- Salivating
- Spasms
- Thirst
- Vomiting

A complicating factor in diagnosing a poisoning is that there may be a long lag time (several days) before the cat demonstrates the clinical signs of toxicity..

Some common poisonous houseplants include:

- Croton
- Crown of Thorns
- Desert Rose
- Dumb Cane (Dieffenbachia)
- Geranium
- Iris
- Lilies ***
- Leafy Cactus
- Marigold
- Oleander
- Onions, garlic and chives ***
- Philodendron
- Poinsettia
- Primula (Primrose)

*** Lilies are extremely toxic to cats. Even when small amounts of the leaves and flowers are ingested, life-threatening acute renal failure may occur.

*** Onions, garlic and chives can also be dangerous to your cats. Toxic amounts are estimated at about five grams of dehydrated onions per kilogram of body weight. Even an ounce of cooked onion can be potentially poisonous to your cat.

Herbal Healing Some Common Poisonous Plants

The plants in the following chart are poisonous to humans as well as cats.

Plants	Poisonous Parts	Symptoms
Bittersweet <i>Celastrus spp.</i>	Bark, leaves and seeds	Vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, coma
Dumb cane <i>Dieffenbachia</i>	All parts	Swelling in throat, vomiting, diarrhea; death can result.
Poison hemlock <i>Conium maculatum</i>	All parts	Dizziness, all loss of muscular control, disordered vision (within 15-45 minutes)
Ivy, English and Baltic <i>Hedera helix</i>	Berries and leaves	Labored breathing, diarrhea, coma
Jimson weed, thorn apple <i>Datura spp.</i>	All parts (extremely poisonous)	Intense thirst, rapid pulse, convulsions, coma, death
Marigold, marsh marigold <i>Caltha palustris</i>	All parts	Mouth irritation, salivation, diarrhea, nervousness
Marijuana, hemp <i>Cannabis sativa</i>	Resinous substance	Blurred vision, coma, drowsiness, and loss of coordination
Mistletoe <i>Phoradendron serotinum</i>	White berries	Vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, coma
Oleander <i>Nerium oleander</i>	All parts (extremely poisonous)	Vomiting, abnormal heartbeat, coma, death may occur.
Philodendron <i>Philodendron spp.</i>	All parts	Swelling of mouth and throat, vomiting and diarrhea; death may result from blockage of windpipe
Poinsettia <i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i>	All parts	Rash or blistering of skin, mouth and throat irritation, vomiting and diarrhea
Poison Ivy <i>Rhus radicans</i>	All parts	Itching, redness of skin, small blisters; local swelling of flesh may occur
Potato <i>Solanum tuberosum</i>	Unripe tubers, sprouts from tubers	Vomiting, diarrhea, coma, stupification
Rhubarb <i>Rheum rhaponticum</i>	Leaf blades	Vomiting, muscular weakness, slow pulse, coma and death, even from small amounts

Judy Fireman, Ed., Cat Catalog: The Ultimate Cat Book (New York: Workman Publishing Co., 1976), p. 198. (The text of this chart is adapted from *Arnoldia*, a publication of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University.)