

Toxicity of Common Houseplants

031-91

Plants are third only to medicines and household chemicals in causing poisonings among children in the United States. It is wise to place all plants and plant materials out of reach of very young children (including seeds, plant bulbs, soil and fertilizers). If you have a young child, buy only non-toxic plants.

The following is a list of the toxicity of common houseplants, including some common ornamentals growing around the home. Following this list is a description of the toxic compounds found in some plants.

POISON CONTROL CENTER

(Toll Free) 1-800-955-9119

Children's Memorial Hospital, Omaha

African Violet—(Episcia reptans) non-toxic.

Aluminum Plant—(Pilea cadierei) non-toxic.

Amaryllis—contain alkaloid lycorine, bulb is most toxic; Crinum, Huemanthus, and Nerine genera of Amaryllis also contain alkaloids in bulbs.

Aralia—(Fatsia japonica) non-toxic.

Arrowhead Plant, Nephthytis—(Syngonium podophyllum) toxic-oxalates.

Asparagus Fern—(Asparagus setaceus plumosus) toxic-dermatitis.

Avocado—(Persea americana) possibly toxic.

Azalea—(Rhododendron occidentale) toxic.

Baby Tears—(Helxine soleirolii) non-toxic.

Bear Feet—(Cotyledon tomentosa) succulent, non-toxic.

Begonia—(Begonia sp.) non-toxic.

Bird-of-Paradise—(Poinciana gilliesii) toxic.

Birdnest Sansevieria—(Sansevieria trifasciata) non-toxic.

Birds Nest Fern—(Asplenium nidus) non-toxic.

Bittersweet—(Solanum dulcamara) toxic-solanine

Bloodlead—(Iresine Herbstii) non-toxic.

Boston Fern—(Nephrolepis exalta) non-toxic.

Boston Ivy—(*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) toxic-oxalates.

Bridal Veil—(*Tradescantia* 'Bridal Veil') non-toxic.

Caladium—(*Caladium* sp.) toxic-oxalates.

Calathea—(*Calathea argyraea*) non-toxic.

Chenille Plant—(*Acalypha hispida*) causes skin and gastrointestinal inflammation.

Christmas Cactus—(*Zygocactus truncatus*) non-toxic.

Christmas Rose—(*Helleborus niger* L.) toxic-glycosides.

Chrysanthemum—(*Chrysanthemum* sp.) may give dermatitis.

Coleus—(*Coleus* sp.) non-toxic.

Corn Plant—(*Dracaena fragrans massangeana*) non-toxic.

Creeping Charlie, Ground Ivy—(*Glechoma hederacea*) toxic.

Creeping Charlie, Creeping Jenny, Moneywort—(*Lysimachia nummularia*) non-toxic.

Creeping Charlie—(*Pilea nummularifolia*) non-toxic.

Creeping Fig—(*Ficus*) possible dermatitis.

Croton—(*Codiaeum variegatum*) many species contain croton oil, a strong purgative which causes gastroenteritis.

Crown of Thorns—(*Euphorbia mili*) toxic.

Cyclamen—(*Cyclamen persicum*) a case of poisoning was reported in 1798.

Donkey Tail—(*Sedum morganianum*) non-toxic.

Dracaena indivisa—(*Cordyline indivisa*) non-toxic.

Dumbcane—(*Dieffenbachia Seguine*) toxic-oxalates

Emerald Duke—(*Philodendron hastatum*) toxic-oxalates.

Emerald Ripple—(*Peperomia caperata*) non-toxic.

English Ivy—(*Hedera helix*) toxic.

False Aralia—(*Dizygotheca elegantissima*) non-toxic.

Ferns—some wild species toxic, no reports of poisoning from houseplant species.

Fiddleleaf Fig—(*Ficus lyrata*) non-toxic.

Gardenia—(*Gardenia radicans floraplena*) non-toxic.

Gold Toothed Aloe—(*Aloe nobilis*) toxic - possible dermatitis.

Grape Ivy—(*Cissus rhombifolia*) non-toxic.

Heartleaf Philodendron—(*Philodendron cordatum*) toxic-oxalates.

Hoya, Wax Plant—(*Hoya* sp.) non-toxic.

Hydrangea—(*Hydrangea* sp.) toxic - contains cyanogenetic glycoside.

Indian Laurel—(*Ficus nitida*) non-toxic, possible dermatitis.

Jade Plant—(Crassula argentes) non-toxic.

Janet Craig Dracaena—(Dracaena deremensis) non-toxic.

Jerusalem Cherry—(Solanum pseudocapsicum) toxic - contains solanine.

Kalanchoe—(Kalanchoe sp.) non-toxic.

Lantana—(Lantana camara) berries of some species toxic.

Lily-of-the-Valley—(Convallaria majalis) toxic-glycosides.

Lipstick Plant—(Aeschynanthus lobbianus) non-toxic.

Madagascar Dragon Tree—(Dracaena marginata) non-toxic

Madagascar Jasmine—(Stephanotis floribunda) non-toxic

Madagascar Lace Plant—(Aponage-ton fenestralis) non-toxic

Marble Queen—(Scindapsus aureus, Pothos aureus) toxic-oxalates.

Majesty—(Philodendron hastatum) toxic-oxalates.

Moon Magic—(Pilea 'Moon Magic') non-toxic.

Narcissus—(Narcissus sp.) toxic-alkaloid lycorin.

Needlepoint Ivy—(Hedera helix 'Needlepoint') toxic.

Norfolk Island Pine—(Araucaria excelsa) non-toxic.

Oleander—(Nerium Oleander, L.) toxic-glycosides.

Parlor Palm—(Chamaedorea elegans) non-toxic.

Painted Needle—(Coleus) non-toxic.

Peacock Plant—(Calathea) non-toxic.

Peperomia—(Peperomia sp.) non-toxic.

Piggyback Plant—(Tolmiea menziesii) non-toxic.

Poinsettia—(Euphorbia pulcherrima Willd) A child died in 1919 from eating poinsettia. Currently, feeding experiments indicate that while poinsettia may cause a little irritation, the reports of serious poisonings are greatly exaggerated.

Ponytail Palm—(Beaucarenia recurvata) non-toxic.

Pothos, Devils Ivy—(Scindapsus aureus) toxic-oxalates.

Prayer Plant—(Maranta leuconeura) non-toxic.

Primula (Primrose)—some people are allergic to this genus. A rash similar to poison ivy may develop.

Purple Passion, Velvet Plant—(Gynura aurantiaca) non-toxic.

Purple Tiger—(Calathea) non-toxic.

Red Princess—(Philodendron hastatum) toxic-oxalates.

Rhubarb—(Rheum rhaponticum) leaves contain toxic oxalates.

Ripple Ivy—(Hedera helix 'Ripple') toxic.

Rubber Tree—(Ficus elastica) non-toxic.

Saddle Leaf—(*Philodendron selloum*) toxic-oxalates.

Sensitive Plant—(*Mimosa pudica*) possibly toxic.

Silver Tree—(*Pilea 'Silver Tree'*) non-toxic.

Snake Plant, Mother-in-law Tongue—(*Sansevieria trifasciata*) non-toxic.

Spider Plant, Airplane Plant—(*Chlorophytum comosum*) non-toxic.

Split Leaf Philodendron—(*Monstera deliciosa*) toxic-oxalates.

Sprengeri Fern—(*Asparagus densiflorus 'Sprengeri'*) possible dermatitis.

Swedish Ivy—(*Plectranthus australis*) non-toxic.

Tahitian Bridal Veil—(*Gibasis geniculata*) non-toxic.

Ti Plant—(*Cordyline terminalis*) non-toxic.

Umbrella Plant—(*Schefflera actinophylla*) non-toxic.

Umbrella Plant—(*Cyperus alternifolius*) toxic.

Wandering Jew—(*Tradescantia albiflora*) non-toxic.

Warneckii—(*Dracaena deremensis 'Warneckii'*) non-toxic.

Weeping Fig—(*Ficus benjamina*) possible dermatitis.

Zebra Plant—(*Aphelandra squarrosa*) non-toxic.

Toxic Compounds

Alkaloid lycorine—irritant to the gastrointestinal tract.

Dermatitis—may give a rash or inflammation after contact with skin or mucous membranes.

Glycosides—cause cardiac stimulation, gastric distress, irritant to mouth and gastrointestinal tract.

Oxalates—plants which contain oxalate salts produce mucous membrane irritation and pain and/or swelling of mouth, lips, tongue, esophagus and stomach.

Solanine—irritation and injury of the digestive tract, abdominal cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, trembling, weakness, unconsciousness.

Toxic—if plants are listed as toxic, they may contain a wide variety of toxins. Damage may be to stomach, heart, kidneys, or other organs.

Non-Toxic—these plants have shown no more toxicity than an equal amount of vegetable matter. Symptoms are unlikely.