

Common Poisonous Plants

House Plants

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Castor bean <i>Ricinus communis</i>	Seeds	Burning sensation in mouth and throat. Two to four beans may cause death. Eight usually lethal. Death has occurred in U.S.
Dieffenbachia (dumbcane) Caladium (elephant's ear), Philodendrons	All parts	Intense burning and irritation of mouth, tongue, lips. Death from dieffenbachia has occurred when tissues at back of tongue swelled and blocked air passage to throat.
Rosary vine (crab's-eye) <i>Ceropegia woodii</i>	Seeds	Among the most highly toxic of natural materials. Severe gastrointestinal irritation, in coordination, paralysis. Less than one seed, if thoroughly chewed, is enough to kill an adult.

Flower Garden Plants

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Autumn crocus <i>Colchicum autumnale</i>	All parts, especially bulb	Burning pain in mouth, gastrointestinal irritation. Children have been poisoned by eating flowers.
Dutchman's breeches, Bleeding heart <i>Dicentra sp.</i>	Foliage, roots	No human poisonings or deaths, but a record of toxicity for livestock is warning that garden species may be dangerous.
Foxglove <i>Digitalis sp.</i>	All parts, especially leaves, flowers, seeds	One of the sources of the drug digitalis. May cause dangerously irregular heartbeat, digestive upset and mental confusion. Convulsions and death are possible.
Hyacinth, narcissus, daffodil <i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Bulbs	Digestive upset including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea when eaten even in small amounts.
Iris <i>Iris sp.</i>	Underground rhizome, also developed leaves	Severe digestive upset from moderate amounts of cultivated or wild irises. However, acidity usually prevents large consumption.
Larkspur <i>Consolida ajacis</i>	Seeds, young plants	Livestock losses are second only to locoweed in western U. S. Therefore, garden larkspur should at least be held suspect
Lily-of-the-valley <i>Convullaria majalis</i>	Leaves, flowers, fruit (red berries)	Produces glycoside-like digitalis, used in medicine to strengthen the beat of a weakened heart. In moderate amounts, can cause irregular heartbeat, digestive upset and mental confusion.
Mayapple (mandrake) <i>Podophyllum sp.</i>	Roots, foliage, unripe fruit	Large doses may cause gastroenteritis and vomiting. Ripe fruit is least toxic part and has been eaten by children--occasionally catharsis results. Cooked mayapples can be made into marmalade.
Monkshood <i>Aconite sp.</i>	Roots, flowers, leaves	Restlessness, salivation, nausea, vomiting, vertigo. Although people have died after eating small amounts of garden aconite, poisoning from it is not common.

Nicotiana, wild and cultivated <i>Nicotiana sp.</i>	Leaves	Nervous symptoms. Poisonous or lethal amounts can be obtained from ingestion of cured smoking or chewing tobacco, from foliage of field-grown tobacco or from foliage of garden variety (flowering tobacco or nicotiana).
Angel's Trumpet, Datura <i>Brugmansia sp.</i>	All parts	Showy tropical plant

Vegetable Garden Plants

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Potato <i>Solanum sp.</i>	Vines, sprouts (green parts), green tubers, fruits.	Death has occurred from eating green parts. To prevent poisoning from sunburned tubers, spoiled green spots should be removed before cooking. Discard spoiled potatoes.
Rhubarb <i>Rheum sp.</i>	Leaf blade	Several deaths from eating raw or cooked leaves. Abdominal pains, vomiting and convulsions a few hours after ingestion. Without treatment, death or permanent kidney damage may occur.

Ornamental Shrubs and Trees

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Common privet <i>Ligustrum sp.</i>	Black or blue wax-coated berries, leaves	Causes gastric irritation and vomiting. Several cases in children reported in Europe.
Daphne	Berries (commonly red, but other colors in various species), bark	A few berries can cause burning or ulceration in digestive tract causing vomiting and diarrhea. Death can result. This plant considered "extremely dangerous", particularly for children.
English Ivy <i>Hedera helix</i>	Berries, leaves	Excitement, difficult breathing and eventual coma. Although no cases reported in U. S., European children have been poisoned.
Golden chain <i>Laburnum sp.</i>	Seeds, pods, flowers	Excitement, intestinal irritation, severe nausea with convulsions and coma if large quantities are eaten. One or two pods have caused illness in children in Europe.
Heath family Mountain laurel, heath, heather, pieris, azaleas, rhododendron, etc.	All parts	Causes salivation, nausea, vomiting and depression. "Tea" made from two ounces of leaves produced human poisoning. More than a small amount can cause death.
Oleander <i>Nerium sp.</i>	Leaves, branches, nectar of flowers	Extremely poisonous. Affects heart and digestive system. Has caused death even from meat roasted on its branches. A few leaves can kill a human being. Not hardy in Pacific Northwest.
Wisteria	Seeds, pods	Pods look like pea pods. One or two seeds may cause mild to severe gastrointestinal disturbances requiring hospitalization. However, with treatment recovery occurs in 24 hours. No fatalities recorded.

Trees and Shrubs

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Apple	Seeds	If eaten in large quantity, can cause death. One man died after eating a cupful.
Black locust <i>Robina psuedoacacia</i>	Bark, foliage, young twigs, seeds	Digestive upset has occurred from ingestion of the soft bark. Seeds may also be toxic to children. Flowers may be fried as fritters.
Buckeye, horse chestnut <i>Aesculus sp.</i>	Sprouts, nuts	Digestive upset and nervous symptoms (confusion, etc.) Have killed children but because of unpleasant taste are not usually consumed in quantity necessary to produce symptoms.
Elderberry <i>Sambucus sp.</i>	Roots, stems	Children have been poisoned by eating roots or using pithy stems as blowguns. Berries are the least toxic part but may cause nausea if too many are eaten raw. Proper cooking destroys toxic principle.
Oaks <i>Quercus sp.</i>	All parts	Eating large quantities of any raw part, including acorns, may cause slow damage to kidneys. However, a few acorns probably have little effect.
Wild black cherry, chokecherries <i>Prunus sp.</i>	Leaves, pits	Poisoning and death have occurred in children who ate large amounts of berries without removing stones. Pits of seeds, foliage and bark contain HCN (prussic acid or cyanide). Others to beware of: several wild and cultivated cherries, peach, apricot and some almonds. But pits and leaves usually not eaten in enough quantity to do serious harm.

Plants in Wooded Areas

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Baneberry (Doll's eyes) <i>Actaea rubra</i>	Red or white berries, roots, foliage	Acute stomach cramps, headache, vomiting, dizziness, delirium. Although no loss of life in U. S., European children have died after ingesting berries.
Jack-in-the-pulpit, skunk cabbage <i>Lysichiton americanum</i>	All parts, especially roots	Contain small needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate that cause burning and severe irritation of mouth and tongue.

Plants in Fields

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Death camas <i>Zygadenus venenosus</i>	Bulbs	Depression, digestive upset, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea. American Indians and early settlers were killed when they mistook it for edible bulbs. Occasional cases still occur. One case of poisoning from flower reported.
Nightshades, European bittersweet, Horse nettle <i>Solanum sp.</i>	All parts, especially unripe berry	Children have been poisoned by ingesting a moderate amount of unripe berries. Digestive upset; stupefaction and loss of sensation. Death due to paralysis can occur. Ripe berries, however, are much less toxic.

Poison hemlock <i>Conium maculatum</i>	Root, foliage, seeds	Root resembles wild carrot. Seeds have been mistaken for anise. Causes gradual weakening of muscular power and death from paralysis of lungs. Caused Socrates' death.
Water hemlock (cowbane, snakeroot) <i>Cicuta douglasii</i>	Roots, young foliage	Salivation, tremors, delirium, violent convulsions. One mouthful of root can kill a man. Many persons, especially children, have died in U. S. after eating this plant. Roots are mistaken for wild parsnip or artichoke.

Holiday Plants

Plant	Toxic Part	Symptoms and Comment
Holly <i>Ilex sp.</i>	Berries	No cases reported in North America, but that large quantities may cause digestive upset.
Jerusalem cherry <i>Solanum pseudocapsicum</i>	Unripe fruit, leaves, flowers	No cases reported, but thought to cause vomiting and diarrhea.
Mistletoe <i>Phoradendron sp.</i>	Berries	Can cause acute stomach and intestinal irritation. Cattle have been killed by eating wild mistletoe.
Paperwhite Narcissus <i>Narcissus sp.</i>	Bulbs	Digestive upset including nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea when eaten even in small amounts.
Poinsettia <i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i>	Leaves, flower	Can be irritating to mouth and stomach, sometimes causing vomiting and nausea, but usually produces no ill effects. Sap may produce "eye" irritation.

If you or anyone you know should eat any of these berries or plants
call your local poison control center.
In Seattle call (206) 526-2121 or 1-800-723-6985.