



Toxicity of Common Houseplants

[31]

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.

Nebraska Regional Poison Center
1-800-222-1222
American Association of Poison Control
Centers 1-800-222-1222

Toxic Compounds

Here is a description of the toxic compounds found in some plants.

- 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.

List of Toxicity of Common Houseplants

The following is a list of the toxicity of common houseplants, including some common ornamentals growing around the home.

- 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*) — 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

Continued on next page

Copyright ©2015

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 milii*) — **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 floraplana*) — 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 cyanogenic 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*) — **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

Primrose (*Primula*) — **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 densiflorous ‘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; (*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