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## Toxic Plants

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Many of our most popular houseplants come from tropical climates where they have adapted to low light levels, making them suitable for the lighting conditions typical in the average home. However many tropical plants also contain compounds that can have adverse reactions in people, pets and livestock. If you have any of the house plants listed below you should find out how dangerous they are, and if the risk they pose to your children or pets is worth keeping them.

- Aloe barbadensis** Aloe Vera, Burn plant level 2 toxicity
- Amaryllis sp.** Amaryllis level 2 toxicity
- Anthurium andraeanum** Flamingo lily level 3-4
- Caladium hortulanum** Angels' wings level 3-4
- Chrysanthemum indicum** Chrysanthemums, Mums level 4 toxicity
- Clivia miniata** Kaffir Lily level 2-4 toxicity
- Codiaeum variegatum** Croton level 2-3 toxicity
- Cyclamen persicum** Cyclamen level 3
- Dieffenbachia sp.** Dumb cane level 3
- Euphorbia milii** Crown-of-thorns level 4
- Euphorbia pulcherrima** Poinsettia (yes, it belongs here) level 4
- Hedera helix** English Ivy level 3
- Hydrangea macrophylla** Hydrangea level 4
- Kalanchoe daigremontiana** Devil's Backbone level 1
- Monstera deliciosa** Ceriman, Swiss-cheese plant level 2-3-4
- Philodendron sp.** Heart leaf philodendron, Philodendron level 2-3-4
- Rhododendron sp.** Azalea level 3
- Solanum pseudocapsicum** Jerusalem Cherry level 3-4

1. **HIGH Toxicity:** *if ingested* these plants may cause serious illness or death
2. **Low Toxicity:** If ingested these plants may cause minor illnesses such as vomiting or gastro-intestinal problems.
3. **Calcium Oxalic acids:** The juice or sap of these plants contains oxalate crystals. These sharp crystals can irritate the skin, mouth, tongue, and throat, resulting in throat swelling, breathing difficulties, burning pain, and stomach discomfort.
4. **Skin Irritation** (Low): The sap of these plants may cause a skin rash or irritation.
5. **Can be fatal to cats or other pets.**



**Examples of Toxic Plants (by no means comprehensive):**

<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Toxic Parts</b>	<b>Level of Toxicity</b>
Alocasia (all species)	Leaves and stems	3
Amaryllis	Bulbs	2
Anthurium (all species)	Leaves and plant saps	3, 4
Asparagus Ferns	Leaves and plant saps	4
Aralias (Polyscias family)	Plant saps	4
Azaleas (Rhododendron)	Leaves and flower nectar	3
Cardboard Palm (Zamia)	All parts	1, 5
Caladium (all species)	Leaves and bulbs	3, 4
Century Plant (Agave)	Plant saps	3, 4
Chinese Evergreen	Plant saps	3, 4
Christmas Holly	Leaves and berries	2
Clivia-Kaffir Lily	All parts	2, 4
Crotons (Codiaeum sp)	Leaves and plant saps	2, 3
Cyclamen (all species)	Bulbs	3
Daffodils	Leaves, flowers, and bulbs	2
Dumb Cane (Dieffenbachia)	Leaves and plant saps	3
English Ivies (Hedera spp)	Plant saps and seeds	3
Easter Lilies	Leaves and bulbs	5
Euphorbias (Poinsettias)	Milky sap	4
Ficus (all species)	Plant saps	4



Fishtail Palm (Caryota)	Seeds and plant saps	3, 4
Jerusalem Cherry (Solanum)	Fruit	2, 3, 4
Mistletoe (Phoradendron)	All parts	1
Ornamental Pepper	All parts	3, 4
Oleander (Nerium)	All parts	1
Oyster Plant (Rhoea)	Plant saps	4
Peace Lily (Spathiphyllum)	Plant saps	3, 4
Pencil Cactus (Euphorbia)	Milky sap	4
Philodendron (all species)	Leaves and plant saps	2, 3, 4
Pothos (Scindapsus)	Leaves and plant saps	3, 4
Sago Palm (Cycas revoluta)	Seeds	1
Schefflera	Leaves and plant saps	2, 4
Snake Plant (Sansevieria)	Leaves and plant saps	2, 4
String of Pearls (Sencio)	All parts	2, 3, 4
Yew (Podocarpus)	All parts	2, 4

### **Absolutely, Positively POISONOUS PLANTS**

1. ***Adenium obesum*** (also known as **sabi star**, **kudu** or **desert-rose**). Exudes a highly toxic sap which is used by the Meridian High and Hadza in Tanzania to coat arrow-tips for hunting.
2. ***Agave***. The juice of a number of species causes acute contact dermatitis, with blistering lasting several weeks and recurring itching for several years thereafter.
3. ***Brugmansia*** (commonly known as **angel's trumpet**). All parts of the plant contain the tropane alkaloids *scopolamine* and *atropine*. Often fatal.



4. ***Caladium*** (commonly known as **angel wings**, **elephant ear** and **heart of Jesus**). All parts of the plant are poisonous. Symptoms are generally irritation, pain, and swelling of tissues. If the mouth or tongues swell, breathing may be fatally blocked.
5. ***Dieffenbachia*** (commonly known as *dumbcane*). All parts are poisonous, causing intense burning, irritation, and immobility of the tongue, mouth, and throat. Swelling can be severe enough to block breathing, leading to death.
6. ***Excoecaria agallocha*** (commonly known as **milky mangrove**, **blind-your-eye mangrove** and **river poison tree**). Contact with milky sap can cause skin irritation and blistering; eye contact can cause temporary blindness.
7. ***Hedera helix*** (or **common ivy**) the leaves and berries are poisonous, causing stomach pains, labored breathing, possible coma.
8. ***Kalanchoe delagoensis*** (commonly known as **mother of millions**) Contains *bufadienolide cardiac glycosides*<sup>[60]</sup> which can cause *cardiac poisoning*, particularly in grazing animals.<sup>[61]</sup> During 1997, 125 head of cattle died after eating mother-of-millions on a travelling stock reserve near Moree, NSW.<sup>[62]</sup>
9. ***Lilium*** (commonly known as **lily**). Most have an unknown water-soluble toxin found in all parts of the plant. Extremely poisonous, yet attractive, to cats, causing acute renal failure; 2 petals can kill.
10. ***Nerium oleander*** (commonly known as **oleander**). All parts are toxic, but especially the leaves and woody stems. Contains *nerioside*, *oleandroside*, *saponins* and *cardiac glycosides*. Causes severe digestive upset, heart trouble and *contact dermatitis*. The smoke of burning oleander can cause reactions in the lungs, and can be fatal.
11. ***Passiflora caerulea*** (also known as the **blue passion flower** or the **common passion flower**). The leaves contain *cyanogenic glycoside*, which breaks down into cyanide.
12. ***Plumeria*** (commonly known as **frangipani**). Contact with the milky sap may irritate eyes and skin.
13. ***Rhododendron*** (certain species commonly known as **Azaleas**). All parts are poisonous and cause nausea, vomiting, depression, breathing difficulties, coma. Rarely fatal.