



Don't Eat the Philodendron!

If you are like me, you have been filling your house with plants for years. Or maybe you simply have one or two favorites around for a little greenery and life. Either way, it is important to know that some common household plants are poisonous to children and pets.

When I was a kid, I liked to make “potions” from various plants and mud in our yard. I would mash them all together and pretend to heal sickness or wounds. As a childcare center director I have observed children “feed” each other all kinds of pretend stuff from air on a spoon to wood chips and grass. Fortunately, most such pretend play is harmless. However, not all is.

The Washington Poison Centers Toxic Exposure Surveillance System indicates that there were over 3,000 cases of human exposure to toxic plants in 2005. Washington Poison Control states:

"Many toxic plants produce very minor symptoms such as a stomach upset, mouth and throat pain or skin rash. If large quantities are swallowed, or if a person frequently takes smaller amounts of the plant, more serious symptoms could develop. Some people are more sensitive to the toxic effects of plants than are others. It is very rare for plants to cause life threatening symptoms."

You can get detailed information regarding which plants are poisonous and which are safe by calling or looking up the poison control web site. Some of the most common and toxic of these plants are listed below. You can get expert poison information 24 hours a day 7 days a week at: 1-800-222-1222.

**Washington State
Poison
Center**

**Phone: 206.517.2350
www.wapc.org
Emergency: 1.800.222.1222**

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For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

In Washington State: Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE
Outside of Washington State: contact your local Circle of Parents agency at
www.circleofparents.org

Common houseplants to be cautious of:

Common Name	Poisonous Parts	Toxicity	Class
Rhododendron		1	<p>Toxicity Class:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major Toxicity: These plants may cause serious illness or death. If ingested, immediately call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222. 2. Minor Toxicity: Ingestion of these plants may cause minor illnesses such as vomiting or diarrhea. If ingested, call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222. 3. Oxalates: The juice or sap of these plants contains oxalate crystals. These needle-shaped crystals can irritate the skin, mouth, tongue, and throat, resulting in throat swelling, breathing difficulties, burning pain, and stomach upset. Call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222 if any of these symptoms appear following ingestion of the plant. 4. Dermatitis: The juice, sap, or thorns of these plants may cause a skin rash or irritation. Wash the affected area of skin with soap and water as soon as possible after contact. The rashes may be very serious and painful. Call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222 if symptoms appear following contact with the plant.
English Laurel		1	
Hydrangea	Blossom	1,4	
Rosary bean	Seeds (a single seed has caused death)	1	
Tomato	Leaves	1,4	
St. Johns Wort		1,4	
Potato Plant		1	
Amaryllis		2	
Begonia		2,3	
Carnation		2,3	
Chrysanthemum		2,4	
Cyclamen		2,4	
Hyacinth	Bulbs	2,4	
Iris		2,4	
Mistletoe		2,4	
Poinsettia	Leaves, stems, milky sap	2,4	
Poppy		2,4	
Tulips		2,4	
Philodendron	Leaves	3	
Elephant ears	Leaves and stem	3,4	

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