



Plants and Kids: 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**

Turn this sheet over for a detailed list of common houseplants to be cautious of!

Common houseplants to be cautious of:

| Common Name | Poisonous Parts | Toxicity | Class |
|----------------|--|----------|--|
| Rhododendron | | 1 | 1. Major Toxicity: These plants may cause serious illness or death. If ingested, immediately call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222. |
| English Laurel | | 1 | |
| Hydrangea | Blossom | 1, 4 | |
| Rosary Bean | Seeds (a single seed has caused death) | 1 | 1. Minor Toxicity: Ingestion of these plants may cause minor illness such as vomiting or diarrhea. If ingested, call the Poison Center at 1.800.222.1222 |
| Tomato | Leaves | 1, 4 | |
| St. Johns Wort | | 1, 4 | |
| Potato Plant | | 1 | 1. Oxalates: The juice or sap of these plants contain 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. |
| 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 | 1. 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. |
| Tulips | | 2, 4 | |
| Philodendron | Leaves | 3 | |
| Elephant Ears | Leaves and stem | 3, 4 | |