

TOXIC AND POISONOUS PLANTS: COMPANION ANIMALS

The first part of this series, which focused on livestock, was published in the *Texas Veterinarian* in February. This piece focuses on resources related to companion animals.

Companion animal information is similar to livestock information relative to audience; information is written for both veterinary professionals and owners. Livestock information is largely about the animals' environment, e.g., range plants, or that which is intentionally or unintentionally added to feedstuffs. Companion animal information can be more complex because the plants could be cultivated as food for humans, packaged as cooking ingredients or present as landscaping, houseplants or medicinal plants.

Information appears to be more abundant related to companion animals, but a closer look reveals two things when seeking reliable information. The first is that much of what is present on the internet has no source information beyond the site on which it appears. Be cautious about that, especially if the information fits what you are hoping to be true. The other is that many sites provide information from the same few reliable resources; it may be efficient to seek these places first.

Lists of plants, often published in both, can be quite useful and are arranged by geography or mechanism of injury. An example is a list of the poisonous and injurious vascular plants of the United States, available at https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/botany_jps/11.

Universities publish information through the veterinary schools, veterinary libraries, animal science and horticulture departments and agricultural extension agencies. They also may provide access to published articles and books. Examples include:

UC Davis

- Safe and Poisonous Garden Plants, https://ucanr.edu/sites/poisonous_safe_plants/
- UCD Toxic Plant Garden, <https://cchah.org/>



LIBRARIES TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

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vetmed.ucdavis.edu/ucd-toxic-plant-garden

Cornell

- Poisonous plants affecting dogs, <https://poisonousplants.ansci.cornell.edu/dogs/index.html>
- Kingsbury's classic book, *Poisonous Plants of the United States and Canada*, is not freely available; however, the 35-page, 1994 *Common Poisonous Plants* is freely available at <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/3497>

University of Illinois

- Plants Toxic to Animals, <https://guides.library.illinois.edu/plants-toxic-to-animals>
- Poisonous Plant Garden, <https://vetmed.illinois.edu/poisonplants/plants.php>

Colorado State University

- Guide to Poisonous Plants, <https://cvsuth.colostate.edu/poisonous-plants/>, includes a list of cultivated trees and plants potentially poisonous to animals as a guide of plants not to have in animal enclosures

Iowa State University

- Houseplant poisoning in small animals, from the journal *Iowa State University Veterinarian*, https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/iowastate_veterinarian/vol49/iss1/5

IEATPLANTS is a plant toxicity project that began at the Oklahoma State University

veterinary library in collaboration with the 3VM toxicology course. The information is now on both that site, <http://info.library.okstate.edu/IEATPLANTS>, and the Texas A&M University library site at <https://tamu.libguides.com/IEATPLANTS>.

The online *Merck Veterinary Manual* has a poisonous plant chapter in the toxicology section at <https://www.merckvetmanual.com/toxicology>. It includes houseplants and ornamentals with images and a table of the scientific and common names, important characteristics, comments and toxic principles and effects and treatment.

Searching for published articles using the resources available to you is also a great strategy. If you don't have access to a library and librarians to assist, look to other columns in this series to assist you in identifying articles and locating freely available legal article copies. [IV](#)

Texas veterinarians may contact the Medical Sciences Library at Texas A&M University for assistance at no cost for reference service, literature searching and copies of articles, chapters and conference papers from our collection. Details can be found at <http://tamu.libguides.com/txvetalum>.

POISON CONTROL RESOURCES

Many plant sites refer to information from the ASPCA Poison Control Center, including both the freely available information and fee consultation service. This includes information for owners and for veterinary professionals at <https://www.aspcapro.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control>. There is extensive freely available information about plants, dogs, cats and horses. The ASPCA Pro site, <https://www.aspcapro.org/>, includes professional-level content in a number of formats, including webinars, tips and how-to guides. Use the search feature or choose Animal Health from the topics.

The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center app has sections for dogs, cats, birds and horses. Each then covers food, plant, medication, weather hazards and household hazards. Individual entries provide a scale of toxicity, common names, symptoms, action to take by risk level and severity. The app provides pet owner resources (news, toxic plant list, podcasts), professional resources (RACE CE, podcasts, veterinary lifeline partnership program, links to the pro site) and calculators for chocolate, rodenticide and anticoagulants.

Another resource is the Pet Poison Helpline, <https://www.petpoisonhelpline.com>, and both the freely available information and fee consultation service. It provides a poison list and information for owners and veterinary professionals.

The Red Cross Pet First Aid app includes poisoning information but not specifically plant poisoning.