

# Poisonous Plants Encountered in Oregon

Human poisoning from plants does not occur at an alarmingly high rate in Oregon. The incidence of such poisonings and the possibilities for serious effects, even fatalities, however, are sufficient to warn both children and adults of the potential hazards. Indeed, many of our most valuable and commonly used landscape and house plants should be considered toxic. Fortunately, most poisonous plants are of little concern with normal use or precautions. Many of those considered to be most dangerous are grown commonly, usually without incident. Any real threat usually involves small children. They are the victims in most cases. Consequently, they should be trained so as to lessen the unlikely chance of poisoning from these plants.

The following lists name the most common poisonous plants encountered in Oregon. These lists are not necessarily complete for Oregon. Some plants known to be poisonous are rarely, if ever, found in Oregon. Also, many lichens, molds, and fungi, including mushrooms and ergot, are toxic, but not included here. Some plants listed are known to be poisonous to animals but have not been proved toxic to humans; it is presumed that they may be toxic to humans as well.

Toxicity of plants and parts of plants is highly variable. Some, such as poison oak, are poisonous upon contact. Others, such as digitalis, are poisonous if eaten. Some parts of a given plant are more or less toxic than other parts of the same plants, while in other cases the entire plant may be toxic. The toxicity of a plant may vary during different stages of its maturity or may be influenced by the environmental conditions to which the plant has been exposed.

Virtually every plant has a potential of being poisonous to someone. People with allergic tendencies may be sensitive to a wide variety of plants. On the other hand, some people are not bothered by plants such as poison oak.

Lethal toxicity of a plant is not alone an indication of the relative danger of that plant. Dosage requirements for lethal

toxicity vary greatly among plants, plant parts, and even humans. The attractiveness of some plants makes them more dangerous than other less inviting plants. Those plants with poisonous fruits, particularly those that are highly colored, may be especially dangerous to small children, whereas another plant with a very poisonous root may be relatively safe because of the small chance that the root will be eaten.

Children should be taught to avoid eating plants not known to be safe. Occasionally, cases of poisoning result from misidentifying poisonous plants as edible fruits or vegetables or by the use of plants in home remedies. Secondary poisoning may also occur. For instance, the use of oleander branches for roasting hotdogs or marshmallows may render these foods quite toxic.

In the following lists, the most dangerous plants are preceded by a bullet (●). This rating is not based solely upon the inherent toxicity of the plant, but indicates also the relative frequency that children, and possibly adults, might be attracted to it. Plants followed by a question mark (?) are believed to be toxic, but their toxicity has not been established fully.

## What to do in case of accidental poisoning

If you think you or your children have encountered any poison, call your physician or nearest emergency center immediately. If you suspect a plant, take a sample of the plant with you to the physician. Take the entire plant, including roots, if possible. If the plant is too large for this, take a couple of branches with leaves, flowers, fruit, or seeds. The more of the plant you can take, the better are the chances of getting proper identification and treatment.

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# Plants that are, or may be, poisonous when eaten (oral toxicity)

Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant	Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant
● Aconite, monkshood, wolfbane ( <i>Aconitum</i> spp.)	Entire—especially roots and seeds	Dumbcane, dieffenbachia ( <i>Dieffenbachia picta</i> , <i>D. seguine</i> )	Stems, leaves
Adder's tongue— See giant adder's tongue		Elderberry ( <i>Sambucus</i> spp.)	Roots, stems, berries (harmless when cooked)
Amaryllis (various) ( <i>Amaryllis</i> spp., <i>Crinum</i> spp., <i>Haemanthus</i> spp., <i>Nerine</i> spp.)	Entire (?)	Elephant ears ( <i>Colocasia</i> spp.)	Entire
Andromeda ( <i>Pieris japonica</i> , <i>P. floribunda</i> )	Leaves	English ivy ( <i>Helix hedera</i> )	Leaves, fruit
Angelica tree ( <i>Aralia</i> spp.)	Fruit	English laurel, Portuguese laurel and their varieties ( <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> , <i>P. lusitanica</i> )	Leaves, fruit, pits
Apricot—See peach		Euonymus, burning bush, etc. ( <i>Euonymus</i> spp.)	Fruits, foliage, bark
● Autumn crocus ( <i>Colchicum autumnale</i> )	Entire	European beech ( <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> )	Seed ("beechnuts")
Azaleas ( <i>Rhododendron</i> spp.)	Leaves	False hellebore, Indian poke, American hellebore, green hellebore ( <i>Veratrum</i> spp.)	Roots, leaves, seeds
Baneberry ( <i>Actaea</i> spp.)	Berries, root stock, sap	Fava bean, broad bean, horse bean ( <i>Vicia</i> spp.)	Raw or partially cooked seeds
Bittersweet ( <i>Celastrus</i> spp.) —Also see nightshades	Berry	Ferns—male fern, bracken fern	Entire
Black laurel, leucothoe ( <i>Leucothoe davisiae</i> )	Leaves	Fiddleneck, tarweed ( <i>Amsinckia intermedia</i> )	Seed
Black locust tree ( <i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> )	Bark, sprouts, leaves, pods, seeds	Figs ( <i>Ficus carica</i> )	Milky sap
Bleeding heart, Dutchman's breeches, squirrel-corn ( <i>Dicentra</i> spp.)	Foliage, roots	Flax ( <i>Linum</i> spp.)	Leaves, seed chaff
Bouncing bet, cow cockle, cow-herb ( <i>Saponaria</i> spp.)	Seeds, foliage (?)	Four o'clock ( <i>Mirabilis jalapa</i> )	Root, seed
Boxwood ( <i>Buxus</i> spp.)	Foliage	● Foxglove, digitalis ( <i>Digitalis</i> spp.)	Foliage (fresh or dried), seeds
Bracken fern—See ferns		Fritillaria, crown imperial, checker lily, snakeshead ( <i>Fritillaria</i> spp.)	Entire (?)
Buckwheat ( <i>Fagopyrum sagittatum</i> )	Foliage (green or dry), seeds	Giant adder's tongue, fawn lily, dogtooth lily, dogtooth violet, trout lily, alpine lily, avalanche lily, lamb's tongue ( <i>Erythronium</i> spp.)	Bulbs
Buffalo bur ( <i>Solanum rostratum</i> )	Foliage, berries, roots	Glory lily, gloriosa ( <i>Gloriosa superba</i> )	Tubers, foliage, flowers
Buttercup, crowfoot ( <i>Ranunculus</i> spp.)	Entire	● Goldenchain tree ( <i>Laburnum</i> spp.)	Seeds, milk of animals eating seeds
Caladium ( <i>Caladium</i> spp.)	Stems, leaves, roots	Ground-cherry ( <i>Physalis</i> spp.)	Unripe fruit
Calla lily ( <i>Zantedeschia</i> spp.)	Leaves	Groundsel, senecio ( <i>Senecio</i> spp.)	Entire (?)
Cascara, buckthorn, coffee berry ( <i>Rhamnus</i> spp.)	Fruit, sap	Henbit ( <i>Lamium amplexicaule</i> )	Foliage
● Castor bean ( <i>Ricinus communis</i> )	Seed (from 2 to 20 seeds may be fatal), foliage to lesser degree	● Horsechestnut, buckeye ( <i>Aesculus</i> spp.)	Nuts, leaves, young shoots, flowers
Cherry—fruiting and flowering ( <i>Prunus</i> spp.)	Leaves, uncooked pits	● Horse nettle, bull nettle ( <i>Solanum carolinense</i> )	Foliage, berries
Chinaberry tree, Texas umbrella tree ( <i>Melia azedarach</i> )	Fruits (worst), leaves, bark, flowers	Horseradish ( <i>Armoracia rusticana</i> )	Foliage, roots (in excess)
Chokecherry ( <i>Prunus virginiana</i> , <i>P.v.</i> var. <i>demissa</i> , <i>P.v.</i> var. <i>melanocarpa</i> )	Leaves, stones in fruit	Horsetail ( <i>Equisetum</i> spp.)	Entire
Christmas rose ( <i>Helleborus niger</i> )	Foliage, rootstocks, sap	Hyacinth ( <i>Hyacinthus orientalis</i> )	Bulbs
Cocklebur ( <i>Xanthium</i> spp.)	Seed, seedling plants	Hydrangeas ( <i>Hydrangea</i> spp.)	Leaves, flower buds
Columbine ( <i>Aquilegia</i> spp.)	Seed, seed pod	Impatiens, balsam, touch-me-not ( <i>Impatiens</i> spp.)	Young stems, leaves
Corn cockle, purple cockle ( <i>Agrostemma githago</i> )	Seed	Iris, flags ( <i>Iris</i> spp.)	Rootstocks (rhizome), foliage (fresh or dried)—either in quantity
Corydalis, fumatory ( <i>Corydalis</i> spp.)	Foliage	Jack-in-the-pulpit, Oregon root, green dragon ( <i>Arisaema</i> spp.)	Roots
Curly dock ( <i>Rumex crispus</i> )—See dock		Japanese pieris, andromeda, Lily-of-the-Valley shrub ( <i>Pieris japonica</i> )— See andromeda	
Cyclamen ( <i>Cyclamen</i> spp.)	Tuber	Jerusalem cherry ( <i>Solanum pseudocapsicum</i> )—See nightshade	
Daffodil—See narcissus		● Jimsonweed, angel's trumpet, devil's trumpet, sacred datura ( <i>Datura</i> spp.)	Leaves, seeds, flower nectar, roots
● Daphne ( <i>Daphne</i> spp.)	Berries, bark, leaves	Jonquil—See narcissus	
Death camas ( <i>Zigadenus</i> spp.)	Bulbs, new growth, foliage	Kalmia—See mountain laurel	
● Delphinium, larkspur ( <i>Delphinium</i> spp.)	Seeds, foliage—especially in young plants	Kentucky coffee tree ( <i>Gymnocladus dioica</i> )	Seeds, seed pods, leaves, sprouts
Dianthus, pinks ( <i>Dianthus</i> spp.)	Seed	Labrador tea ( <i>Ledum</i> spp.)	Foliage
Digitalis—See foxglove		Lantana, red sage ( <i>Lantana camara</i> )	Berries may be lethal
Dock, sorrel ( <i>Rumex</i> spp.)	Leaves		
Dogbane, Indian hemp ( <i>Apocynum</i> spp.)	Milky juice of foliage		
Dog fennel ( <i>Anthemis cotula</i> )	Foliage		
Dogtooth lily—See giant adder's tongue			

● Most dangerous plants, because they are either most frequently encountered or potentially lethal.

Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant
Lily-of-the-valley ( <i>Convallaria majalis</i> )	Leaves, roots, fruits
Lima bean ( <i>Phaseolus lunatus</i> )	Seeds (uncooked)
Lobelia, cardinal flower, Indian tobacco ( <i>Labelia</i> spp.)	Leaves, fruit (overdoses)
Locoweed, milk vetch, rattleweed, crazy weed ( <i>Astragalus</i> spp., <i>Oxytrapis</i> spp.)	Entire (?)
Lupines, bluebonnets ( <i>Lupinus</i> spp.)	Foliage, seeds
Marijuana, wild hemp ( <i>Cannabis sativa</i> )	Leaves, flowers, resinous secretions
Marsh marigold, cowslip ( <i>Caltha</i> spp.)	Entire—young plants less toxic
Milkweeds ( <i>Asclepias</i> spp.)	Foliage, sprouts
● Mistletoe ( <i>Pharadendran villasum</i> , <i>P. flavescens</i> )	Foliage, fruit (also tea from fruit), fatalities recorded
Mockorange ( <i>Philadelphus</i> spp.)	Fruit
Mole plant, caper spurge ( <i>Euphorbia lathyris</i> )	Entire, fatalities recorded
Moonseed ( <i>Menispermum canadense</i> )	Fruit
Morning glory, bindweed ( <i>Convolvulus</i> spp., <i>Ipamea</i> spp.)	Seeds
● Narcissus, daffodil, jonquil ( <i>Narcissus</i> spp.)	Bulbs
Nettle—See horse nettle, also nightshade	
Nicotiana, wild and cultivated tobaccos ( <i>Nicotiana</i> spp.)	Foliage
● Nightshades, Jerusalem cherry, bittersweets, nettles ( <i>Solanum</i> spp.)	Vines, roots, leaves, berries (especially dangerous to children)
● Oleander ( <i>Nerium oleander</i> )	Leaves, stems, branches
Peach, apricot ( <i>Prunus persica</i> , <i>P. armeniaca</i> )	Kernels (seeds) in pits
Philodendrons (house plants) ( <i>Philodendrum</i> spp.)	Leaves, stems
Pigweed, careless weed, redroot ( <i>Amaranthus</i> spp.)	Foliage
Pimpemel, scarlet or red pimpemel, poor man's weatherglass ( <i>Anagallis arvensis</i> )	Entire
Plum ( <i>Prunus</i> spp.)	Leaves, seeds
Poinciana, bird-of-paradise bush ( <i>Poinciana gilliesii</i> )	Green seed pods
Poinsettia ( <i>Euphorbia pulcherrima</i> )	Recent research indicates that poinsettia may not be toxic; however, precautions are suggested
● Poison hemlock ( <i>Canium maculatum</i> )	Entire—foliage, roots, seeds (fruits)
● Poppies ( <i>Papaver</i> spp.)	Seeds, foliage, roots (?)

Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant
Potato ( <i>Solanum tuberosum</i> )	Vines, sunburned or spoiled tuber, green skin on tubers, sprouts on tubers
Privets ( <i>Ligustrum</i> spp.)	Foliage, fruit (berry)
Rhododendrons ( <i>Rhododendron</i> spp.)	Leaves
Rhubarb ( <i>Rheum raphaniticum</i> )	Leaf blade (edible stalk not toxic)
Rusty leaf, fool's huckleberry, mock azalea ( <i>Menziesia ferruginea</i> )	Foliage
St. Johnswort, goat weed, tipton weed, Klamath weed, Aaron's beard ( <i>Hypericum</i> spp.)	Entire
Scilla, squill ( <i>Scilla nancrupta</i> , <i>S. s. peruviana</i> , <i>Urginea maritima</i> )	Entire (?)
Scotch broom ( <i>Cytisus scoparius</i> )	Foliage, seed
Sheep sorrel, red sorrel, sour dock ( <i>Rumex</i> spp.)—See dock	
● Skimmia ( <i>Skimmia japonica</i> )	Berry
Skunk cabbage ( <i>Lysichitum americanum</i> )	Berry
Snowdrop ( <i>Galanthus nivalis</i> )	Bulbs
Spider lily ( <i>Hymenocallis</i> spp.)	Bulb
Spurge, mole plant, caper spurge, snow-on-the-mountain ( <i>Euphorbia</i> spp.)	Foliage; other parts may be toxic
Star-of-Behlehem ( <i>Ornithogalum umbellatum</i> )	Bulbs, leaves
Sweet peas ( <i>Lathyrus adriaticus</i> , and other <i>Lathyrus</i> spp.)	Stem
Tansy, bitter buttons, hind-head, parsley fern ( <i>Tanacetum vulgare</i> )	Entire plant
Tansy ragwort ( <i>Senecia jacobaea</i> )	Entire—foliage, roots, flowers, seed
Tarweed—See fiddleneck	
Tobacco—See nicotiana	
Tomato ( <i>Lycopersicon</i> spp.)	Foliage, shoots (fruit not toxic)
Tulip ( <i>Tulipa</i> spp.)	Bulb
Virginia creeper, woodbine ( <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> )	Berries
● Water hemlock ( <i>Cicuta maculata</i> )	Entire, but especially roots and seeds
White snakeroot ( <i>Eupatorium rugosum</i> )	Leaves, stems
Wild calla ( <i>Cala palustris</i> )	Leaves
Wild peas ( <i>Lathyrus</i> spp.)	Seeds
Wisteria ( <i>Wisteria</i> spp.)	Seeds, pod
● Yews ( <i>Taxus</i> spp.)	Foliage, bark, seed (fruit or berry)
Yucca, Spanish bayonet, soapweed, Adam's needle ( <i>Yucca</i> spp.)	Root
Zephyr lily, atamasco lily, fairy lily ( <i>Zephyranthes atamasco</i> )	Bulbs, leaves

## Plants that are, or may be, poisonous when touched (dermal toxicity)

Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant
Ailanthus, tree of heaven ( <i>Ailanthus altissima</i> )	Leaves, flowers
Buttercup, crowfoot ( <i>Ranunculus</i> spp.)	Entire—rarely dermally toxic
Cascara buckthorn, coffee berry ( <i>Rhamnus</i> spp.)	Fruit, sap
Christmas rose ( <i>Helleborus niger</i> )	Foliage, rootstocks, sap
Crown-of-thorns ( <i>Euphorbia splendens</i> , <i>E. milli</i> )—See spurges	

Plant	Toxic Parts of Plant
Figs ( <i>Ficus carica</i> )	Milky sap
Gas plant ( <i>Dictamnus albus</i> )	Leaves, seed pods
Ginkgo, maidenhair tree ( <i>Ginkgo biloba</i> )	Juice of fruit
Hop ( <i>Humulus lupulus</i> )	Leaves, flowers
Iris, flags ( <i>Iris</i> spp.)	Rootstocks (rhizomes), foliage (fresh or dried)
Jimsonweed, angel's trumpet, devil's trumpet, sacred datura ( <i>Datura</i> spp.)	Leaves, flowers

## Plants that are, or may be, poisonous when touched (dermal toxicity); continued

<i>Plant</i>	<i>Toxic Parts of Plant</i>	<i>Plant</i>	<i>Toxic Parts of Plant</i>
Lady slippers ( <i>Cypripedium</i> spp.)	Leaves and stems (especially when wet)	Primrose ( <i>Primula</i> spp.)	Leaves, stems
Lily-of-the-valley ( <i>Convallaria majalis</i> )	Leaves, rootstocks	St. Johnswort, goat weed, tipton seed, klamath weed ( <i>Hypericum perforatum</i> )	Entire
Nettle ( <i>Urtica</i> spp.)	Leaves, stems	Sheep sorrel, red sorrel, sour dock ( <i>Rumex acetosella</i> )	Leaves
Oleander ( <i>Nerium oleander</i> )	Leaves	Smartweed ( <i>Polygonum</i> spp.)	Leaves
Osage orange ( <i>Maclura pumifera</i> )	Milky juice	Spurges, mole plant ( <i>Euphorbia</i> spp.)	Foliage (milky sap in stems, leaves)
Parsnip ( <i>Pastinaca sativa</i> )	Foliage	Trumpet-creeper, trumpet-vine ( <i>Campsis radicans</i> )	Flowers
Pencil tree, spurge tree, Malabar tree, monkey fiddle, milk bush ( <i>Euphorbia tiraculli</i> ) —See spurges		Walnuts ( <i>Juglans</i> spp.)	Juice of green hull
Poison oak, poison ivy ( <i>Rhus</i> spp.)	Entire plant (so is debris carried in smoke when plant is burned)		

## Plants sometimes reported to be toxic, but toxicity not verified

Anemone, windflower ( <i>Anemone</i> spp.)	Creeping mahonia ( <i>Mahonia repens</i> )	Mountain heather ( <i>Cassiope</i> spp.)
Bearberry honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera</i> spp.)	He-huckleberry ( <i>Lyania ligustrina</i> )	Nandina, heavenly bamboo ( <i>Nandina domestica</i> )
Belladonna lily ( <i>Amaryllis belladonna</i> )	Holly ( <i>Ilex</i> spp.)	Pittosporum ( <i>Pittosporum tabira</i> )
Bloodroot ( <i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i> )	Honeysuckle ( <i>Lonicera</i> spp.)	Purslane, pusley ( <i>Portulaca aleracea</i> )
Button bush ( <i>Cephalanthus accidentalis</i> )	Matrimony vine ( <i>Lycium halimifalium</i> )	Scarlet runner bean ( <i>Phaseolus coccineus</i> )
Clematis ( <i>Clematis</i> spp.)	Mayapple ( <i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> )	Snowberry ( <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> )
Cow parsnip ( <i>Heracleum lanatum</i> )	Mexican orange ( <i>Chatsya ternata</i> )	Twinflower ( <i>Linnaea borealis</i> )
		Water parsnip ( <i>Sium suave</i> )

### References

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