

Summer is finally in full swing. Of all times of the year, this is when we spend the most time outdoors with our pets. The veterinarians at Pet Poison Helpline would like to help pet owners avoid life-threatening situations that can happen when pets ingest plants and substances that are harmful to them. Please feel free to share this information with your pet-loving audiences.

For an interview with one of Pet Poison Helpline's veterinarians regarding this or any pet-related topic, please contact me.

My best,

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Veterinarians Warn Pet Owners about Summer Plants and Substances  
Poisonous to Dogs and Cats**

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (July 11, 2011) – Many would say that summer is the best time of year – it's when we spend the most time in the great outdoors with our families, friends and pets.

Unbeknownst to many pet owners, summer also brings with it certain flowers, substances and [plants that are dangerous to dogs and cats.](#)

“Most pets use their sense of smell and taste to investigate things that are new to them,” said Ahna Brutlag, DVM, MS, assistant director at [Pet Poison Helpline](#). “When they come across interesting plants or other items, their first reaction is to smell it, which often leads to tasting it. Pet owners who are aware of poisonous plants and substances can avoid potential dangers that can result in emergency trips to the veterinarian.”

Some of the most dangerous summertime plants for pet owners to be aware of are listed below.

### **Sago Palm**

Very popular in warmer climates, this household and outdoor plant can be extremely harmful to pets. All parts of the plant, including the fronds/leaves, nuts and seeds are especially poisonous to dogs. Ingesting just a small amount can cause severe vomiting, bloody stools, damage to the stomach lining, severe liver failure and, in some cases, death. This plant is considered one of the most deadly in dogs and long-term survival is poor when ingested. Without treatment, sago palm poisoning can result in severe, irreversible liver failure. Prompt treatment is always needed for the best prognosis.

### **Lily of the Valley**

When ingested by pets, the *Convallaria majalis* plant, also known as Lily of the Valley, can cause vomiting, diarrhea, a drop in heart rate, severe cardiac arrhythmias, and possibly seizures. This plant contains cardiac glycosides, which are also used in many human heart medications. Any pet with a known exposure should be examined and evaluated by a veterinarian and treated symptomatically. Treatment may include blood pressure monitoring, heart monitoring, and, in severe cases, an expensive antidote to bind the toxin (e.g. Digibind).

### **Lilies**

Cat owners should be aware of lilies and the dangers they pose. While Peace, Peruvian and Calla lilies cause only minor symptoms when eaten, other more deadly types like the *Lilium* and *Hemerocallis* species (Tiger, Asiatic, Easter, Japanese Show and Day lilies), are highly toxic to cats. Ingesting very small amounts of the plant from grooming the pollen off the fur, or eating as little as two petals or leaves, can result in severe kidney failure. If a cat consumes any part of these lilies, or even drinks the water in the vase, he or she needs immediate veterinary care to prevent kidney failure. Decontamination, such as inducing vomiting and giving binders like activated charcoal, are imperative in the early toxic stages. This is followed by one to two days of intravenous fluid therapy, kidney function monitoring tests and supportive care.

### **Crocuses**

There are two types of Crocus plants: one that blooms in the spring and the other in the autumn. The spring plants are more common and cause only gastrointestinal upset accompanied by vomiting and diarrhea in dogs and cats. However, the autumn Crocus, also known as Meadow Saffron or *Colchicum Autumnale*, are highly toxic and can cause severe vomiting, gastrointestinal bleeding, and multisystem organ failure with bone marrow suppression. Symptoms may be seen immediately but can also be delayed for days. If you witness your pet eating a crocus and you are not sure what variety it is, it's best to seek veterinary care immediately for decontamination and treatment.

### **Fertilizers or soil additives**

In addition to flowers and plants, there are other gardening-related dangers that pet owners should be aware of, such as fertilizers and pesticides. While fertilizers are typically fairly safe for pets, those that contain blood meal, bone meal, feather meal and iron may be especially tasty – and dangerous – to them. Large ingestions of these products can form a concretion in the stomach, obstructing the gastrointestinal tract and causing severe pancreatitis. Also ingestion of pesticides and insecticides, especially if they contain any organophosphates (e.g., disulfoton found in common rose-care products), can be life-threatening, even when ingested in small amounts.

Enjoy the beautiful gardens and flowers this summer, knowing that you have the knowledge to keep your pets safe. If, however, you think a pet may have ingested something harmful, take action immediately. Contact your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline at 1-800-213-6680. Pet Poison Helpline is the most cost-effective animal poison control center in North America charging only \$35 per call, including unlimited follow-up consultations. Pre-program your cell phone with these life-saving numbers in case of emergency.

The veterinarians at Pet Poison Helpline recently produced a video titled “[Garden Dangers to your Pet.](#)” Additional videos are also [available](#) on a variety of topics on Pet Poison Helpline’s website at <http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com/Ask-the-Vet-Videos>.



### **About Pet Poison Helpline**

[Pet Poison Helpline™](#), a division of [SafetyCall International®](#), is an animal poison control service based out of Minneapolis available 24 hours, seven days a week for pet owners and veterinary professionals who require assistance treating a potentially poisoned pet. The staff can provide treatment advice for poisoning cases of all species, including dogs, cats, birds, small mammals, large animals and exotic species. As the most cost-effective option for animal poison control care, Pet Poison Helpline's fee of \$35 per incident includes unlimited follow-up consultations. Pet Poison Helpline is available in North America by calling 800-213-6680. Additional information can be found online at [www.petpoisonhelpline.com](http://www.petpoisonhelpline.com).

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