

Poisonous Spring Plants

Many common outdoor plants are potentially toxic to pets. Plants have been used for their medicinal and toxic properties for thousands of years. Many of these plants have beautiful flowers and foliage or desirable growth habits. If pet owners are unaware of the potential danger, there can be tragic consequences.

Anemone (Pasque Flower, Windflower, Lily of the Field, Wild Crocus): Toxic Part: Every part of the plant. Signs: Pain and swelling of the mouth. Acute inflammation of the pharynx with salivation and pawing at the mouth. Edema of the lips, tongue and throat. Treatment: Analgesics may be necessary. Intubation if breathing is compromised.

Caltha (Marsh Marigold, Cowslip, Meadow Bright, Soldier's Buttons): Toxic Part: The entire mature plant. Signs: Very irritating to the mucous membranes. Blisters are common. Hemorrhagic gastroenteritis can occur. Treatment: Symptomatic treatment for oral ulcers and irritation. Gastric lavage followed by a cathartic and activated charcoal is recommended if large amounts are ingested. Fluid therapy may be required. Vomiting is not recommended.

Convallaria (Lily of the Valley): Toxic Part: Every part of the plant. Signs: Anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, ataxia (loss of muscle coordination), cardiac dysrhythmia, confusion, weakness to collapse, and death. Treatment: Induced vomiting or gastric lavage followed by administration of a cathartic and activated charcoal. Supportive care and intravenous fluids.

Dicentra (Bleeding Heart, Dutchman's Breeches): Toxic Part: Every part of the plant. Signs: Onset of signs is rapid. Trembling, hyperexcitability, salivation, and vomiting are seen with minimal ingestion. Recumbency and seizures can occur if large amounts are consumed. Treatment: Vomiting and/or gastric lavage followed by administration of a cathartic and activated charcoal. Most animals will

recover without additional treatment.

Hyacinthus (Hyacinth, Garden Hyacinth): Toxic Parts: The entire plant is toxic but the bulbs are the most toxic. Signs: May range from irritation of the mucous membranes to gastrointestinal distress, nausea and vomiting. Treatment: Induced vomiting or gastric lavage followed by a cathartic and activated charcoal. Flushing the mouth with lots of water and milk to aid in oral irritation.

Narcissus (Daffodil, Jonquil): Toxic Parts: Every part of the plant is toxic but the bulbs are most toxic. Signs: Gastrointestinal distress including vomiting, intestinal cramping, and diarrhea is typical. Tremors and convulsions are rare. Hypotension and death may occur in severe cases. Treatment: Induced vomiting or gastric lavage followed by a cathartic and activated charcoal. Fluid therapy may be necessary.

Pet owners should not offer any treatment on their own. If ingestion of a toxic plant is suspected, the pet owner should see their veterinarian as soon as possible. Bring the entire plant or a diagnostic portion of the plant if possible for identification.