

Common Plant Questions and Answers

Some cats like to nibble on houseplants. Find out what to do if your pet eats a poisonous plant.

Also, some people think that animals have a natural instinct not to eat poisonous plants. That is not true! Pets will eat almost anything. Therefore, owners must poison-proof their environment.

6. What should pet owners do if they suspect their animal has ingested a poisonous plant? What symptoms should they look for? If you suspect your cat ingested a poisonous plant, contact your veterinarian immediately. Bring in part of the plant to a nursery for identification if the exact species is not known. Symptoms of poisonings can include almost any clinical sign. The animal may even appear completely normal for several hours or days.

7. What about pesticides and fertilizers that might be in the garage or tool shed? Make sure your pets do not go on lawns or in gardens treated with fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides until the time listed as safe on the label by the manufacturer. If you are uncertain about the usage of any product, contact the manufacturer for clarification before using it. Always store pesticides, fertilizers and herbicides in areas inaccessible to your pets.

The most serious problems resulting from fertilizer ingestion in pets are usually due to the presence of metals. For instance, depending on the amount ingested, iron toxicity could occur. Iron can cause severe gastrointestinal upset and result in multi-organ damage. Also, ingestion of large amounts of fertilizer can cause severe gastric upset and possibly gastrointestinal obstruction.

The most dangerous forms of pesticides include: snail bait containing metaldehyde, fly bait containing methomyl, systemic insecticides containing disyston or disulfaton, zinc phosphide containing mole or gopher bait and most forms of rat poisons. When using pesticides, place the products in areas that are totally inaccessible to your companion animals. Always store pesticides in secured areas.

8. Can pet owners train or teach their pets not to eat dangerous plants? There may be ways that a pet owner could train their pets to avoid certain areas of the home or yard where there are poisonous plants. However, the safest method is to prevent exposure to the plant by removing the plants from your pet's home and yard.