

Common Plant Questions and Answers

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

1. How big a problem are poisonous plants and pets? A large volume of poison hotline calls involves pet exposure to plants and questions about plant toxicity. The most common and dangerous cat-related calls we receive concern ingestion of lilies.

2. Does the type of pet I have make a difference? Some plants are only toxic to certain animal species. One example would be certain members of the Liliaceae family that cause kidney failure in cats. This type of plant only causes mild gastric upset if ingested by a dog, guinea pig or rabbit, and it is considered nontoxic when ingested by people. As of yet, no one understands the reason for this species difference.

There are many poisonous houseplants and garden plants. You can't assume that if you have an indoor plant, it's nontoxic.

3. What types of lilies cause kidney failure in felines and why (and why would a cat ever eat a lily)? Cats are naturally curious and often chew on plants. All parts of the lily are considered toxic to cats, and consuming even small amounts can be deadly. Within just a few hours of ingestion, the cat may vomit, become lethargic or develop a lack of appetite. These signs are initially vague, but continue and worsen as kidney damage progresses. The actual reason for this is unknown, but is currently under investigation. Without prompt and proper veterinary treatment, the cat may develop kidney failure.

The following lilies have been shown to cause kidney failure in cats:

Common name (Scientific name) Easter lily (*Lilium longiflorum*) Tiger lily (*Lilium tigrinum*) Rubrum lily (*Lilium speciosum*) Japanese show lily (*Lilium lancifolium*) Day lily (*Hemerocallis* species)

Please note: This list is not all inclusive.