

# PLANTS THAT CAN POISON

Compiled by: The San Diego Turtle and Tortoise Society

P.O. Box 712514, Santee, California 92072-2514

619-593-2123

[www.sdturtle.org](http://www.sdturtle.org)

The purpose of this list is to make you aware of plants that are potentially dangerous to humans and pets. It was compiled from a variety of poison lists. Every effort has been made to identify the plants by their common and scientific names, along with the portion of the plant that is dangerous. Plants known to be toxic to tortoises are marked with an asterisk (\*). The number in ( ) refers to toxicity symptoms listed on page 4. Plants with (D) potentially cause dermatitis. For emergency information, call the San Diego Poison Information System, 1-800-876-4766.

**Acokanthera:** fruit and flowers

**Aconite/Monkshood\*:** root, flowers, leaves

**African Violet (Saintpaulia ionantha):** leaves

**Agapanthus/African Lily:** foliage, bulbs

**Aloe (Aloe vera, Aloe barbadensis):** possible irritant if not fresh

**Almond:** *See Prunus Spp.*

**Amaryllis (Amaryllis belladonna)\*:** all parts

**Amsinckia/Tarweed:** foliage, seeds

**Anemone/Windflower:** all parts

**Angel 's Trumpet Tree (Brugmansia, Datura):** toxic

**Apple:** *See Prunus Spp.*

**Apricot:** *See Prunus Spp.*

**Arrowhead Vine:** toxic

**Atropa belladonna:** all parts, esp. black berries

**Autumn Crocus\*:** bulbs

**Avocado:** leaves

**Azalea (Rhododendron) (18):** all parts are fatal!

**Bamboo ssp:** all parts

**Baneberry/Doll's Eyes\*:** berries, roots, foliage

**Beach Pea (Lathyrus maritimus):** consider all parts suspect

**Belladonna Lily (Amaryllis)\*:** all parts

**Betel Nut Palm\*:** all parts

**Bird of Paradise (Strelitzia reginae):** foliage, flowers, seed pods

**Bittersweet (Solanum celastrus/dulcamera):** leaves, berries

**Black Locust:** bark, sprouts, foliage

**Bleeding Heart/Dutchman's Breeches (Dicentra) (13):** foliage, roots

**Bloodroot (Sanguinaria):** all parts

**Bluebonnet (Lupinus):** all parts

**Bluegreen Algae (Mycrocystis):**all parts

**Blue Weed (Zchium vulgare):** leaves, stems (D)

**Boston Ivy (Parthenocissus tricuspidata):** all parts

**Bottlebrush (Callistemon):** flowers

**Bougainvillea:** flowers, leaves

**Boxwood (Buxus sempervirens)\*:** all parts, leaves (D)

**Buckeye Horse Chestnuts (Aesculus):** sprouts, roots

**Buckthorn (Rhamus spp.):** sap, fruit (D)

**Burning Bush, European (Euonymus europaes):** leaves, fruit

**Buttercup, Bermuda (Oxalis cernus):** leaves

**Buttercup, creeping (Ranunculus):** all parts, leaves (D)

**Buttonbush (Ceptolanthus occidentalis):** leaves

**Caladium:** all parts

**Calla Lily:** all parts

**Candy Tuft (Iberis):** consider all parts suspect

**Cardinal Flower (Lobelia):** all parts

**Carnation/Sweet William/Pinks (Dianthus):** all parts

**Carolina Jessamine (Gelsemium sempervirens):** flowers, leaves, sap

**Casava (Euphorbiacea):** roots

**Castor Bean (Ricinus communis) (5):** seeds are fatal!

**Cestrum (Cestrum spp.):** leafy shoots

**Celandine (Chelidonium):** consider all parts suspect

**Cherry:** *See Prunus spp.*

**Cherry Laurel:** *See prunus Spp.*

**China Berry Tree (Melia azedarach):** berries

**Chinese Evergreen (Aglaonema modestum. A. simplex):** foliage

**Chinese Lantern (Physalis alkekengi):** consider all parts suspect

Christmas Berry/California Holly (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*): berries, leaves  
Christmas Rose (*Helleborus niger*): all, esp. leaves (D)  
Chrysanthemum/Shasta Daisy (*Chrysanthemum maximum*): foliage, flowers  
Citrus Fruits (esp. Persian Lime): leaves  
Coffee Berry (*Rhamnus* spp.): sap, fruit (D)  
Columbine (*Aquilegia*): all parts  
Common Privet (*Ligustrum*): black/blue wax-coated berries & leaves  
Coral Plant (*Euphorbium*): all parts  
Cow Cockle (*Saponaria vaccaria*): seeds  
Creeping Charlie (*Glechoma hederacea*): black or blue  
Crocus\*: all parts  
Croton (*Euphorbiaceae*) indoor plants are safe; outdoor plants are toxic  
Crown-of-Thorns (*Euphorbia* spp.): milky sap (D)  
Cyclamen: foliage, stems, flowers  
Daffodil (*Narcissus*)\*(1): bulbs may be fatal  
Daphne/Spurge/Laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) (15): berries are fatal!  
Death Camus (*Sygadenus venenosus*)\*: all; roots fatal  
Deadly Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*)\*: all parts  
Delphinium (Larkspur annual) (7): all parts  
Destroying Angel/Death Cap (*Amanita phalloides*)\*: all parts  
Devil's Ivy: toxic  
Dianthus/Pinks/Sweet William/Carnation: all parts  
Dieffenbachia (Dumb Cane): all parts, esp. sap  
Dogwood (*Cornus*): all parts, esp. sap  
Dumb Cane (*Dieffenbachia seguine*) (4): stems, leaves  
Eggplant (*Solanaceae*): all except fruit  
Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) (24): all, esp. roots; except ripe fruit  
Elephant Ears/Taro (*Colocasia*) (4): all parts including fruit  
English Ivy (*Hedera helix*): berries, all ivies are toxic  
Euphorbia/Crown of Thorns/Poinsettia (Spurge) (3): all, milky sap (15)  
False Hellebore (*Veratrum viride* & other species): all, roots fatal  
Ficus Benjamina/Weeping Fig/Fig: possible irritant  
Fiddle Leaf Fig (*Ficus lyrata*): foliage, latex sap  
Fiddle Neck/String of Pearls (*Senecio*): all parts  
Fig (*ficus* spp.): milky sap (D)  
Flax (*Linum usitatissimum*): all, esp. immature seed pods

Fly Agaric (Fly amanita mushrooms)\*: all parts  
Four O'Clock (*Mirabilis jalapa*): all parts  
Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)\*(12): all parts can be fatal  
Gardenia (*Rubiaceae*): consider all parts suspect  
Gelsemium *sempervirens* (Carolina jessamine): all parts  
Gladiolus: can cause mild nausea  
Golden Chain (*Laburnum* spp.): seeds/pods may be fatal  
Grape Ivy/Heart Ivy: all ivies are fatal  
Heavenly Bamboo (*Nandina domestica*): all parts  
Hellebore (*Ranunculaceae*): all parts  
Hemlock/Conium/Cicuta (*Tsuga*)\*(30, 31): all parts  
Henbane\*: all parts  
Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*, *I. opaca*, *I. vomitoria*): leaves, berries  
Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus*): all parts  
Horsetail Reeds (*Equisetum hyemale*): all parts  
Huckleberry, Garden (*Solanum nigrum*): unripe berries, leaves  
Hyacinth (garden type not water) (1): foliage, flowers, bulbs can be fatal  
Hydrangea\*: all parts  
Impatiens/Balsam/Touch-Me-Not/Snapweed: all parts  
Iris (*Iris* spp.) (11): underground stems (rhizomes) (D)  
Ivy, (*Hedera*, *Senecio* spp., *Napata* spp.): all ivies are toxic  
Jack-In-The-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphylla*) (26): all  
Jasmine, Yellow (*Jasminum*): all parts  
Jatropha/Purge Nut/Curcas Bean/Peregrina/Psychic Nut: seeds, oil  
Jequirity Bean: toxic  
Jerusalem Cherry (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*): fruit, leaves  
Jessamine/Jasmine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*): berries are fatal!  
Jessamine, Night Blooming (*Cestrum* spp.) (19): leafy shoots  
Jimson Weed/Thorn Apple (*Datura stramonium*)\*(32): all parts  
Johnson Grass (*Sorghum*): all parts are toxic  
Jonquil (*Narcissus jonquilla*): toxic  
Juniper (*Juniperus*): all parts  
Lady's Slipper/Moccasin Flower (*Paphiopedilum*): all parts  
Lambkill/Sheep Laurel (*Kalmia augustifolia*)\*: leaves  
Lantana Camara/Red Sage (20): foliage, green berries are fatal!  
Larkspur (*Delphinium*) (7): foliage, roots; seeds may be fatal!  
Laurel (*Primus* varieties): all parts are fatal!  
Laurel, Australian (*Pittosporum* spp.) (18): all  
Laurel, Mountain (*Kalmia*) (18): leaves, flowers  
Lily, Belladonna (*Amaryllis belladonna*): bulbs  
Lily, Climbing (*Gloriosa* spp.): all parts



Lily, Crinum (*Crinum asiaticum*): bulbs  
 Lily of the Nile (*Agapanthus africanus*): foliage, bulbs  
 Lily, Naked Lady (*Brunsvigia roses*): bulbs  
 Lily-Of-The-Valley (*Convallaria sp.*)\*(10): all parts  
 Lily, spider (*Hymenocallis americana*): bulbs  
 Lily, Zephyr (*Zephranthes spp.*): leaves, bulbs  
 Lobelia/Cardinal Flower: all parts, fruit (D)  
 Locoweed\*: all parts  
 Locust, Black (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*): all parts  
 Lupine (*Lupinus*)\*: leaves, pods, esp. seeds  
 Machineel: all parts  
 Majesty (*Philodendron hastatum*): leaves, sap  
 Marigold (*Tagetes*): consider all parts suspect  
 Marigold, Desert (*Baileya multiradiata*): whole plant  
 Marijuana: all parts  
 Matrimony Vine (*Lycium helimifolium*): leaves, young shoots  
 May Apple/Mandrake (*Podophyllum peltatum*): all parts  
 Mescal (Peyote)\*: all parts  
 Milkweed (*Asclepias*): all parts  
 Mistletoe\* (*Phorodendron flavescens*) (6): berries are fatal!  
 Moccasin Flower/Lady Slipper (*Cypripedium spectabiles*): all parts  
 Mock Orange (*Primus caroliniana*): all parts  
 Mock Orange (*Philadelphus spp.*): fruit  
 Monkshood (*Aconitum ranunculecea*)\*(8): foliage, esp. seeds & roots  
 Moonflower (*Calonyction spp.*): seeds  
 Moonseed: berries may be fatal  
 Morning Glory (*Ipomea*) (27): all parts  
 Mother-In-Law Tongue (*Sansevieria trifasciata*): toxic  
 Mountain Laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*): young leaves/shoots are fatal!  
 Mushrooms & Toadstools (wild types): all parts  
 Narcissus/Daffodil (1): bulbs can be fatal  
 Natal Cherry (*Solanum*): berries  
 Nectarine: *See Prunus Spp.*  
 Nephthytis (*Syngonium podophyllum*): foliage  
 Nettle/Stinging Nettle (*Urtica*): consider all parts suspect  
 Ngaio (*Myoporum laetum*): leaves  
 Nicotiana//Tree Tobacco (wild & cultivated)\*: leaves  
 Nightshade, Black (*solanum modiflorum*): unripe berries  
 Nightshade/European Bittersweet (*Solanum nigura*): all, esp. unripe berries  
 Oak Tree (*Quercus*) (23): foliage, acorns

Orchid, Lady Slipper (*Cypripedium spp.*): hairy stems, leaves (D)  
 Oleander (*Nerium oleander*) (2): all parts  
 Oleander, Yellow (*Thevetia peruviana*): all parts  
 Osage, Orange (*Maclura pomifera*): milky sap  
 Pansy/Violet (*Viola*): all parts (OK for tortoises)  
 Pasque Flower (*Anemone patens*): young plants, flowers  
 Peach (*Prunus spp.*): leaves; seeds: *See Prunus Spp.*  
 Pear: *See Prunus Spp.*  
 Penny Royal (*Hedeoma, Mentha*): foliage, flowers  
 Penstemon family: *Digitalis & Scrophularia*: consider toxic  
 Peony (*Paeonia*): all parts  
 Peppers (*Capsicum*): foliage  
 Periwinkle/Myrtle (*Vinca*): all parts  
 Peyote (Mescal): toxic  
 Pheasant's Eye/Spring Adonis (*Adonis vernalis*): consider all parts suspect  
 Philodendron (*Philodendron spp.*): all including sap  
 Pimpernel, Scarlet (*Anagallis spp.*): all parts  
 Pinks/Sweet William/Carnation (*Dianthus*): all parts  
 Plum *See Prunus Spp.*  
 Pokeweed/Pokeberry (*Phytolacca*): roots  
 Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) (3): leaves, sap are fatal! (D)  
 Poison Hemlock (*Canium maculatum*)\*: all parts are fatal!  
 Poison Ivy/Poison Oak/Poison Sumac (*Rhus sp.*)\*: all parts (D)  
 Poppy: all except California poppies are dangerous  
 Potato (*Solanaceae*)\*: green skin and raw shoots are fatal!  
 Pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*): leaves  
 Primrose (*Primula*): leaves, stems (D)  
 Privet (*Ligustrum*): leaves, berries  
 Prunus Spp. (apricot, bitter almond, cherry, cherry laurel, nectarine, peach, plum) (22): fleshy fruit edible; all other parts poisonous including seeds  
 Pyracantha: foliage, fruit  
 Ranunculus/Creeping Buttercup: all parts  
 Red Bird-of-Paradise (*Caesalpinia pulcherrima*): leaves & seeds  
 Redwood: wood chips poisonous to fish, turtles, other aquatics  
 Rhododendron (*Azalea*)\*(18): all parts are fatal!  
 Rhubarb (*Rheum rhaponticum*)\*(14): leaves/blades fatal (D); stems edible  
 Rosary Pea/Jequirity Bean (*Ricinus communis*)(5): all, seeds ("beans") fatal!

Rosemary (*Romarinus officinalis*): leaves of some varieties are poisonous  
Rubber Tree (*Ficus elastica decora*): consider all parts suspect  
Russian Thistle (*Carduus* or *Silybum*): foliage, flowers  
Saffron, Meadow (*Colchicum autumnale*) (9): leaves  
Sage (*Salvia*): leaves of some varieties are poisonous  
Salmon Berry (*Rubus*): foliage, fruit  
Salvia (Sage): the leaves of some varieties are poisonous.  
Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis*): all parts  
Schefflera/Umbrella Tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*): all parts  
Scotch Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*): seeds  
Scrophularia (*Penstemon* family): contains cardiac stimulant; consider toxic  
Senecio: all parts  
Shasta Daisy/*Chrysanthemum* (*Chrysanthemum maximum*): foliage, flowers  
Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichitum*): roots  
Snakeroot, White (*Eupatorium rugosum*): leaves, stems  
Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum*): all parts  
Snow-on-the-Mountain (*Euphorbia* spp.) (3): milky sap (D)  
Sour Dock (*Rumex acetosa*): leaves  
Spanish Bayonet (*Yucca aloifolia*): root  
Spider Mum (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*): foliage, flowers  
Squirrel Corn (*Dicentra canadensis*): all parts  
St. John's Wort (*Hypericum perforatum*): all parts when eaten (D)  
Star-Of-Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum*) (9): all parts  
Star Thistle (*Centaurea*): consider all parts suspect  
Stranonium: all parts  
String-of-Pearls/Fiddle Neck (*Senecio*): all parts  
Sudan Grass (*Sorgum*): all parts  
Sundew (*Droscera*): foliage  
Sweet Pea (*Lathyras odoratus*) (28): stems  
Tansy (*Tanacetum*): all parts  
Taro/Elephant's Ear (*Calocasia*): stems, leaves

Tar Weed (*Eriodictyon*): foliage, flowers, seed pods  
Tiger Lily (*Lium tigrinum*): all parts  
Thornapple (*Datura* spp.) (32): all parts  
Toad Flax (*Linaria*): foliage  
Toadstool: all parts  
Tobacco (*Nicotiana* spp.): all parts  
Tomato (*Lycopersicon* spp.): foliage, vines  
Toyon Berry/Christmas Berry (*Heteromeles*): leaves; berries are toxic  
Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*): foliage, flowers (D)  
Trillium/Wake Robin: foliage  
Tulip (*Tulipa* spp.) (29): bulbs  
Trumpet Vine/Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis*): all parts  
Umbrella Tree (*Schefflera actinophylla*): all parts  
Verbena (*Verbena*): foliage, flowers  
Venus Flytrap (*Dionacea*): all parts  
Vetch (*Vicia*): seeds, pods  
Vinca/Periwinkle/Myrtle: all parts  
Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus*): foliage, seed pods  
Walnut (*Julgans* spp.): green hull juice (D)  
Water Hemlock (*Cicuta maculata*)\*: all parts, esp. roots, are fatal!  
Wild Blackcherry/Chokecherry/Rum Cherry (*Prunus serotina*): leaves  
Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca*): underground roots, foliage  
Wisteria: seeds, pods  
Yellow Jasmine (*Jasminum*): all parts  
Yellow Oleander (*Nerium oleander*): all parts, esp. kernels of the fruit  
Yellow Star Thistle (*Centaurea*): foliage, flowers  
Yerba Santa (*Eriodictyon*): foliage, seeds (only stems cooked for humans)  
Yew (*Taxus*)\* (21): foliage, flowers, berries are toxic  
Yucca aloifolia/Spanish Bayonet: roots

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### Toxicity Symptoms of Some of the Poisonous Plants Above:

1. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. May be fatal.
2. Extremely poisonous. Affects the heart, produces severe digestive upset; has caused death.
3. Fatal. One leaf can kill a child.
4. Intense burning & irritation of the mouth & tongue. Death can occur if base of tongue swells enough to block the air passage of the throat.



5. Fatal. One rosary pea seed has caused death. One or two castor bean seeds are near the lethal dose for adults
6. Fatal. Children & adults have died from eating the berries.
7. Digestive upset, nervous excitement, depression. May be fatal.
8. Digestive upset, nervous excitement.
9. Vomiting, nervous excitement.
10. Irregular heartbeat & pulse, usually accompanied by digestive upset & mental confusion
11. Severe, but not usually serious. Digestive upset.
12. One source of the drug Digitalis. It's used to stimulate the heart. In large amounts the active principles cause dangerous irregular heartbeat & pulse. Usually digestive upset & mental confusion. May be fatal.
13. May be poisonous in large amounts. Has proved fatal to cattle.
14. Fatal. Large amounts of raw or cooked leaves can cause convulsions, coma, followed rapidly by death.
15. Fatal. A few berries can kill a child.
16. Mild to severe digestive upset. Many children are poisoned by this plant.
17. Severe poisoning. Excitement, staggering, convulsions, coma. May be fatal.
18. Fatal. Produces nausea & vomiting, depression, difficult breathing, prostration & coma.
19. Fatal. Digestive disturbance, nervous symptoms.
20. Fatal. Affects lungs, kidneys, heart, nervous system. Grows in the southern U.S. & in moderate climates.
21. Fatal. Foliage more toxic than berries. Death is usually sudden and without warning symptoms.
22. Fatal. Contains a compound that releases cyanide when eaten. Symptoms that often appear within minutes include gasping, excitement, prostration.
23. Affects kidneys gradually. Symptoms appear only after several days or weeks. Takes a large amount for poisoning. Children should not be allowed to chew on acorns.
24. Children have been poisoned by using pieces of the pithy stems for blowguns. Nausea & digestive upset.
25. Children have suffered nausea, weakness & depression after chewing the bark & seeds.
26. Like Dumb Cane, contains small needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate that cause intense irritation & burning of the mouth & tongue. Sap causes contact dermatitis.
27. Blue-purple color resembling wild grapes. Contains a single seed. (True wild grapes contain several small seeds.) May be fatal.
28. Sweet Peas contain a poison that causes a form of paralysis. It is seldom fatal, but it can keep a victim bedridden for months.
29. One Tulip bulb contains enough poison to kill a man.
30. Fatal. Resembles a large wild carrot. Used in ancient Greece to kill condemned prisoners.
31. Fatal. Violent & painful convulsions.
32. Abnormal thirst, distorted sight. Delirium, incoherence & coma. Common cause of poisoning. Has proved fatal.

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