Common Poisonous House Plants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Name</th>
<th>Scientific Name</th>
<th>Toxic Parts</th>
<th>Symptoms Produced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flamingo Flower</td>
<td>Anthurium</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caladium</td>
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<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clivia</td>
<td>Clivia</td>
<td>All plant parts contain lycorine</td>
<td>Ingestion produces nausea and diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumb Cane</td>
<td>Dieffenbachia</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devil's Ivy</td>
<td>Epipremnum syn. Scindapsus</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poinsettia</td>
<td>Euphorbia pulcherrima</td>
<td>Milky latex sap contains terpenes and diterpenes</td>
<td>Latex causes nausea, diarrhea, vomiting and irritiation if swallowed. Skin contact results in severe dermatological irritation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivy</td>
<td>Hedera</td>
<td>leaves and berries contain hederin, a saponin</td>
<td>Ingestion produces burning sensation in throat and gastroenteritis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amaryllis</td>
<td>Hippeastrum</td>
<td>bulbs contain licorine</td>
<td>Ingestion causes nausea and diarrhea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myrtle</td>
<td>Myrtus communis</td>
<td>All plant parts contain tannin and volatile oils</td>
<td>Ingestion causes nausea and vomiting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Cheese Plant</td>
<td>Monstera</td>
<td>Leaves contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oleander</td>
<td>Nerium oleander</td>
<td>All plant parts contain glycosides</td>
<td>One leaf is fatal and will disrupt heart function, trigger circulatory failure and lead to death.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxalis</td>
<td>Oxalis</td>
<td>All plant parts contain oxalic acid</td>
<td>Ingestion causes nausea and vomiting and kidney inflammation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart-Leaf Philodendron</td>
<td>Philodendron scandens</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aralia</td>
<td>Polyscias</td>
<td>All plant parts contain saponins</td>
<td>Ingestion causes gastrointestinal irritation, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Umbrella Tree</td>
<td>Schefflera syn. Brassaia</td>
<td>All plant parts contain oxalic acid and saponins</td>
<td>Ingestion causes vomiting, loss of coordination, and other symptoms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem Cherry</td>
<td>Solanum pseudocapsicum</td>
<td>Fruit contains solanine, a highly toxic glyco-alkaloid</td>
<td>Ingestion causes burning sensation in mouth and throat, followed by gastric irritation, fever and diarrhea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace Lily</td>
<td>Spathiphyllum</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
<td>Intense irritation of the mucous membranes produces swelling of the tongue, lips and palate.</td>
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<td>Arrowhead Vine</td>
<td>Syngonium</td>
<td>All plant parts contain calcium oxalate</td>
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Ingestion of household plants by children under age five is the leading cause of inquiries to poison control centers nationwide. The best treatment for poisoning is to prevent it from ever happening. Teach children not to taste or play with or eat non-food plants both indoors and outdoors.

There are many houseplants which are perfectly safe to grow but as lovely and harmless as others may appear, they can be toxic and/or dangerous in other ways. It is important to be as knowledgeable as possible about the plants growing in your home.

Chemicals concentrated in the cells of roots, leaves, bark and seeds serve as the plant's defense against insect and animal attack. Some of these compounds can be toxic, especially if ingested or touched by humans and can, result in adverse reactions.

A few plant families to be wary of include: the Poinsettia family (Euphorbiaceae), the Philodendron family (Araceae), the Cactus family (Cactaceae), and the Tomato family (Solanaceae). Dumbcane (Dieffenbachia), in the Araceae family, has plant parts which contain oxalate crystals. If ingested these can cause the tongue to swell so severely breathing stops. Crown of Thorns (Euphorbia), a succulent in the Euphorbiaceae family has toxic sap which can be quite irritating to the skin. Among the most poisonous are the compounds found in Castor Bean (Ricinus communis) and Oleander (Nerium oleander) which can be deadly if ingested.

**STEPS TO ELIMINATE RISK OF POISONING - IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:** If a plant has been ingested, identify the plant, learn how much was eaten, contact your local poison control center, watch for adverse symptoms, take the plant with you if you are advised to go to the nearest hospital emergency room. *Always know your local poison control center contact number.*

**PLANT IDENTIFICATION:** Learn which houseplants are poisonous and to what degree. A local poison control center can provide information on poisonous plants.

Be sure to properly identify and label houseplants with a tag on the branches rather than a stake that can easily be removed. It is important to note that plants often have several common names but only one botanical name. Contact the nearest botanical garden, cooperative extension service, retail nursery or florist for assistance in proper plant identification or research horticultural books.
EXPOSURE TO POISONS: Exposure to poison is caused by ingestion of plant parts and/or by contact to the skin. Ingestion of plant parts can cause internal poisoning, heart or kidney failure. Skin contact can produce unpleasant symptoms such as dermatitis and allergic reaction. Brushing against sharp prickles, spines and thorns can also be extremely painful.

SAFE DISPLAY OF HOUSEPLANTS: Do not grow potentially toxic houseplants within easy reach of a child. Understand which plants are safe to grow and display indoors.

PREPAREDNESS: Teach children not to taste or play with or eat non-food plants both indoors and outdoors.

Even though some plant parts will have a bitter, unpleasant taste, be prepared for emergencies with first aid supplies handy (a bottle of syrup of ipecac to induce vomiting). Your poison control center will coach you on proper administering

Common household chemicals (Look at below, but study the ones we went over in class)

AIR FRESHENERS
Most air fresheners interfere with your ability to smell by coating your nasal passages with an oil film, or by releasing a nerve deadening agent. Known toxic chemicals found in an air freshener: Formaldehyde: Highly toxic, known carcinogen. Phenol: When phenol touches your skin it can cause it to swell, burn, peel, and break out in hives. Can cause cold sweats, convulsions, circulatory collapse, coma and even death.

AMMONIA
It is a very volatile chemical, it is very damaging to your eyes, respiratory tract and skin.

BLEACH
It is a strong corrosive. It will irritate or burn the skin, eyes and respiratory tract. It may cause pulmonary edema or vomiting and coma if ingested. WARNING: never mix bleach with ammonia it may cause fumes which can be DEADLY.

CARPET AND UPHOLSTERY SHAMPOO
Most formulas are designed to overpower the stain itself, they accomplish the task but not without using highly toxic substances. Some include: Perchloroethylene: Known carcinogen damages liver, kidney and nervous system damage. Ammonium Hydroxide: Corrosive, extremely irritating to eyes, skin and respiratory passages.

DISHWASHER DETERGENTS
Most products contain chlorine in a dry form that is highly concentrated. #1 cause of child poisonings, according to poison control centers.

DRAIN CLEANER
Most drain cleaners contain lye, hydrochloric acid or trichloroethane. Lye: Caustic, burns skin and eyes, if ingested will damage esophagus and stomach. Hydrochloric acid: Corrosive, eye and skin irritant, damages kidneys, liver and digestive tract. Trichloroethane: Eye and skin irritant, nervous system depressant; damages liver and kidneys.

FURNITURE POLISH
Petroleum Distillates: Highly flammable, can cause skin and lung cancer. Phenol: (see Air fresheners, Phenol.) Nitrobenzene: Easily absorbed through the skin, extremely toxic.

MOLD AND MILDEW CLEANERS
Chemicals contained are: Sodium hypochlorite: Corrosive, irritates or burns skin and eyes, causes fluid in the lungs which can lead to coma or death. Formaldehyde: Highly toxic, known carcinogen. Irritant to eyes, nose, throat, and skin. May cause nausea, headaches, nosebleeds, dizziness, memory loss and shortness of breath.

OVEN CLEANER
Sodium Hydroxide (Lye): Caustic, strong irritant, burns to both skin and eyes. Inhibits reflexes, will cause severe tissue damage if swallowed.

ANTIBACTERIAL CLEANERS
may contain: Triclosan: Absorption through the skin can be tied to liver damage.

LAUNDRY ROOM PRODUCTS
Sodium or calcium hypochlorite: Highly corrosive, irritates or burns skin, eyes or respiratory tract. Linear alkylate sulfonate: Absorbed through the skin. Known liver damaging agent. Sodium Tripolyphosphate: Irritates skin and mucous membranes, causes vomiting. Easily absorbed through the skin from clothes.

TOILET BOWL CLEANERS
 Hydrochloric acid: Highly corrosive, irritant to both skin and eyes. Damages kidneys and liver. Hypochlorite Bleach: Corrosive, irritates or burns eyes, skin and respiratory tract. May cause pulmonary edema, vomiting or coma if ingested. Contact with other chemicals may cause chlorine fumes which may be fatal.

OTHER NASTY THINGS THAT ARE AROUND YOUR HOME

PESTICIDES
Most pesticides have ingredients that affect the nervous system of insects. Dimpylate: Better known as Diazinon, extremely toxic. Impairs the central nervous system. Chlorinate Hydrocarbons: Suspected carcinogen and mutagen. Accumulates in food and in fatty tissue. Will attack the nervous system. Organophosphates: Toxic and poisonous. If you can smell it, your lungs are absorbing it.

**FLEA POWDERS**
Carbaryl: Very toxic, causes skin, respiratory and cardiovascular system damage. Chlordane: Accumulates in the food chain, may damage eyes, lungs, liver, kidney and skin. Dichlorophene: Skin irritation: May damage liver, kidney, spleen and central nervous system.

**LICE SHAMPOO**
Especially vulnerable are children. Lindane: Inhalation, ingestion, or ABSORPTION through the SKIN causes vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions and circulatory collapse. May cause liver damage, stillbirths, birth defects and cancer.

**CAR WASH AND POLISH**
Petroleum Distillates: Associated with skin and lung cancer, irritant to skin, eyes, nose and lungs. Entry into the lungs may cause fatal pulmonary edema, most marked Danger, Harmful or Fatal.

**TAR AND BUG REMOVER**
Contains XYLENE and PETROLEUM DISTILLATES

**Warning Terms Used Are Significant**

**DANGER** - Harmful or fatal if swallowed A taste to a teaspoonful taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult.

**WARNING** - Harmful if swallowed A teaspoonful to an ounce taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult.

**CAUTION** - Harmful if swallowed An ounce to over a pint taken by mouth could kill an average sized adult.