

BACKYARD HAZARDS

Summertime lures us outdoors, and what could be better than relaxing in the safety of your own backyard with your pets? Unfortunately, there are a surprising number of toxins lurking in the average yard. It's important to monitor your pet and be familiar with the potential dangers of ingesting certain plants or other items. Depending on the toxin, ingestion may cause irritation of the tongue, mouth and esophagus, digestive upset, seizures, coma, kidney or liver failure, cardiac arrhythmias or death. Symptoms of poisoning could include drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, anorexia, tremors, seizures and lethargy.

The ASPCA currently lists 444 toxic plants, some of which are listed below. For the complete list, look at the ASPCA website at www.aspc.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants.

Many lilies such as Asiatic lilies, Day lilies and Lily of the Valley (more toxic to cats than dogs)	Apple, apricot, plum, peach and cherry trees – the leaves, stems and seeds are all toxic
American Holly	Caladium
Gladiola	English Ivy
Clematis	Hasta
Coleus	Rhododendron
Yucca	

Many indoor plants are toxic as well. Other hazards in your yard include pesticides, fungicides, weed killers, fertilizers (including blood meal and bone meal), plant foods and cocoa bean shell mulch.

And what about that backyard barbecue? You turn your back to flip burgers and your dog jumps up on the table to sample the food. While the indiscretion is an inconvenience for the party, it could be fatal for your pet. Some foods cause minor gastrointestinal distress, but others may cause heart, liver, kidney or spleen damage and some may cause seizures or death. Again the ASPCA provides the following list of foods that are potentially toxic to pets.

Alcoholic beverages	Avocado
Onions, onion powder (cooked and raw)	Chocolate (all forms)
Coffee (all forms)	Fatty foods
Macadamia nuts	Moldy or spoiled foods
Raisins and grapes	Salt
Yeast dough	Garlic
Products sweetened with Xylitol	