

Beautiful (But Deadly) Blooms

April showers bring May flowers, and now that the spring season is approaching, many people will begin gardening, as well as purchasing plants and flowers. As gardens begin to grow and homes and yards become filled with green plants and vibrant blooms, we need to be sure that curious cats and dogs are safe from any potential dangers. Certain flowers and plants are extremely toxic and can be deadly if ingested. It is a good idea for people with a green thumb-as well as all pet owners- to keep lifesaving information on recently purchased foliage on hand.

Cats are prone to chewing on indoor or outdoor plants, so if you know your mischievous kitty does this, you might want to check out the ASPCA Animal Poison control Center's Web Site <http://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants> where you can read lists of toxic and nontoxic plants to ensure that none of those you own are poisonous to pets. In addition, new puppies love to chew on anything they come across. Make sure indoor plants are placed in safe, unreachable areas to prevent potential poisonings.

Some flower and plants included on the list are: amaryllis, calla lilies, (and all other lilies), carnations, azaleas, daffodils, elephant's ear, hibiscus, morning glory, tulips, sago palms and especially oleander. Surprisingly, there are approximately one hundred types of plants and flowers which are considered toxic. Your local floral shop or nursery should be able to provide you with a list of potentially toxic foliage if you do not have access to a computer to visit the web site provided earlier. Keep this valuable information on hand, which can help identify potential problems if the need arises.

The most common side effects that result from ingesting plants or flowers are vomiting and/or diarrhea. If you suspect that

your pet may have been exposed to a potentially toxic substance, call your veterinarian for advice. It may be that emergency treatment is the best course of action you can take for your pet. You can also call the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435. The center is staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and for a consultation fee, the staff will give you information, as well as take as many follow-up calls as needed from your veterinarian for the duration of the treatment. They will also send you and your veterinarian a comprehensive case summary report.

Also, keep in mind that some plants and flowers are sprayed with pesticides that can cause serious adverse reactions. Finally, remember that some pets have allergies to pollens from plants and flowers, just like people. The difference is that people get "hay fever" symptoms that can include sneezing, runny noses and itchy eyes, but pets get itchy, inflamed skin. Symptoms include scratching excessively at the skin or ears, as well as constant licking and chewing on the skin. If you notice these symptoms, call your veterinarian to discuss ways to give your pet some relief from airborne allergies to blooming flowers, as well as plant and tree pollen.