

# Fall and Winter Holiday Plant Toxicity in Dogs

## Toxic Plants

Flowers and plants add beauty to any holiday, and they make great holiday gifts. But if your family includes pets, you may want to learn which plants are safe and which ones you need to avoid.

Here is a list of plants to avoid. Remember that ingesting bulb plants often cause the most severe illnesses.

- **Holly** (*Ilex sp.*). This plant, commonly found around Christmas time, can cause intense vomiting and diarrhea. Mental depression can also occur.
- **Amaryllis** (*Amaryllis spp.*). Ingestion can result in vomiting, diarrhea, depression, lack of appetite, tremors, drooling and abdominal pain.
- **Mistletoe** (*Phoradendron spp.*). This plant, another Christmas plant, can also cause significant vomiting and diarrhea. In addition, this plant has been associated with difficulty breathing, slowed heart rate, collapse and, if a lot is ingested, death has occurred. Some animals may even show erratic behavior and possible hallucinations.
- **Poinsettia** (*Euphorbia*). This plant can cause irritation to the mouth and stomach and sometimes vomiting. It has a low level of toxicity and is overrated as a toxic plant. Many people consider it basically non-toxic.
- **Christmas cactus, Thanksgiving cactus, Easter cactus** (*Schlumbergera or Zygocactus*). In dogs, if large quantities of this plant are ingested, vomiting, possibly with blood, diarrhea, possibly with blood and mental depression have been reported. With small ingestions, typically there are no signs of toxicity. These plants are considered low toxicity plants.

Some less common toxic winter holiday plants include:

- ❑ **American bittersweet** (*Celastrus scandens*). Ingestion results in weakness, vomiting and seizures.
- ❑ **European bittersweet** (*Solanum dulcamara*). Ingestion results in drooling, vomiting, diarrhea, depression, lack of appetite, weakness, confusion and low heart rate.
- ❑ **Chrysanthemum** (*Chrysanthemum morifolium*). Ingestion results in vomiting, diarrhea, depression, drooling and lack of appetite.
- ❑ **Christmas rose** (*Helleborus niger*). Ingestion results in abdominal pain, vomiting, bloody diarrhea and delirium.
- ❑ **Jerusalem cherry** (*Solanum pseudocapsicum*). Ingestion results in vomiting, diarrhea, mouth ulcers, seizures, mental depression, respiratory depression, shock and death.
- ❑ **Autumn crocus** (*Colchicum autumnale*). Ingestion of the bulbs results in mouth irritation, bloody vomiting, diarrhea, shock, kidney failure, liver damage and bone marrow suppression.
- ❑ **Thanksgiving cactus** (*Zygocactus truncactus*). Ingestion results in vomiting, diarrhea and depression. Cats also can develop staggering.
- ❑ **Christams palm** (*Veitchia merrillii*). This plant is considered nontoxic.
- ❑ **Christmas orchid** (*Cattleya trianaei*). This plant is considered nontoxic.
- ❑ **Christmas dagger fern** (*Polystichum spp*). This plant is considered nontoxic.
- ❑ **Mistletoes cactus** (*Thipsalis cassutha*). This plant is considered nontoxic.
- ❑ **Burning bush** (*Euronymous alatus*). Ingestion can result in vomiting, diarrhea, depression and lack of appetite.

#### **Legal Disclaimer**

If your pet is showing any signs of distress or you suspect your pet is seriously ill, CONTACT YOUR VETERINARIAN immediately.

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