Cat-safe plants

Your guide to plants in your house and garden that are safe and unsafe for your cat



The words 'poisonous plant' and 'cat' in the same sentence will naturally worry any cat owner. There are many plants out there that are considered dangerous to cats, plants that are already in many houses and gardens. But this needs to be seen in context. This leaflet aims to be a guide of which flowers are safe, those where caution is advised and those that should not be anywhere near cats.

Plants are categorised as the following:

Danger!

Major toxicity: serious illness or death. **AVOID**

Danger! Considered rare

Major toxicity: serious illness or death but considered rare. Cats unlikely to indest. Only toxic if indested in large quantities but depends on the plant variety or the plant's stage of bloom.

Caution advised

Minor toxicity

- · Could cause vomiting or diarrhoea
- Juice or sap could irritate skin, mouth, tongue and throat
- Could cause skin rash or irritation

Safe for cats

No known toxins that affect cats. However, despite being non-toxic they may still cause a tummy upset if ingested.

Say no to lilies!

The most important tip for all cat owners is to avoid lilies both outdoors and inside the house. Even ingesting small amounts of the lily plant will prove fatal, in some cases cats can be saved if they receive intensive veterinary care in time. Although fabulously fragrant and showy, they simply aren't worth the risk. Cats don't have to deliberately chew on a lily (all parts are poisonous, including vase water), just brushing past it could shake pollen on their fur and when grooming themselves it will prove toxic.

Is your cat a nibbler?

Although cats like to eat grass, thankfully they are usually very discerning when it comes to eating things, which can prevent possible poisonings. But of course, some cats are notorious nibblers. This is when it helps to be aware of the plants you have around you, those which seem to be irresistible to your cat, and the signs of possible poisoning.



Lilies

Things to note

- Outdoors: The garden and all its delights may well prove a distraction for a cat and they are likely to focus primarily on familiar grass
- Indoors: A bored cat may nibble on anything and more frequently; including indoor plants and bouquets
- Even plants without toxins can cause a tummy upset if eaten
- Non-toxic weeds will become toxic if weedkiller is used!

Plant toxins can be dangerous, but there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration, such as the amount taken and the individual animal's health.

Signs to look out for

If you know your cat has ingested a toxic plant, don't wait for symptoms to show, contact your vet immediately. Remember that even the tiniest part of a lily may have devastating effects which needs urgent action.

If your cat starts showing the following symptoms seek veterinary advice straight away. If you know the cause then tell the vet or give them a sample as it can focus their treatment. Even a sample of vomit may help diagnosis. Signs can include, but are not limited to:

- salivation
- vomiting
- diarrhoea
- twitching and/or fitting
- · breathing difficulties
- collapse
- coma

Easy things to do

- Avoid lilies
- Clear prunings and fallen berries immediately and dispose of away from pets
- · Keep bulbs out of reach
- Plant cat grass and catnip to distract your cat from other plants
- Create an enriching home for your cat with hiding places and high perches
- For indoor cats especially, have frequent play sessions with cat toys

Cats and outdoor plants

Danger!

Crocus Autumn (saffron, Colchicum autumnale, crocus sativus, Liliaceae)

Day lily (Hemerocallis)

Foxglove** (digitalis)

Fritillary (Snakeshead)

Gloriosa superba (glory lily, flame lily, climbing lily)

Juniper (Savin, sabina) berries

Lily** (Lilium, Hemerocallis) ALL LILIES!

Lily of the Valley** (Convallaria majalis)

Nerium oleander** (dogbane family)

Ornithogalum umbellatum (Star of Bethlehem)

Water hemlock

Yew (Taxus)

Danger! Considered rare

Aconite (monkshood, Eranthis hyemalis, scilla mischtschenkoana, wolf's bane, ranunculus)

Azalea (Rhododendron family)

Chrysanthemum (contains pyrethrin, found in dog flea treatment)

Delphinium (Larkspur)

Laburnum

Prunus (cherry laurel, peaches, cherries, apricots, plums, nectarines)

Nicotiana (flowering tobacco)

Rhododendron (azalea)

Rhubarb

Sweet peas (Lathyrus)

Tomato plant (Solanum)

Vinca minor (periwinkle)

Caution advised

Achillea (yarrow, milfoil, carpenter's weed)

Agapanthus (African blue lily)

Allium (ornamental onion, garlic, lily leek)

Alstroemeria* (Peruvian lily, Lily of Incas)

Amaryllis (Hippeastrum)

Ammi (bullwort, common bishop's weed)

Anemone (windflower)

Anthurium (flamingo flower)

Aquilegia (Columbine)

Arrow grass (found in marshes)

Bay leaf tree (Laurus nobilis)

Begonia

Berberis (Barberry)

Bergenia (elephant's ears, Saxifragaceae)

Bird of paradise (Strelitzia)

Bluebell (Hyacinthoides)

Borage (starflower)

Broom (Cytisus)

Bupleurum falcatum (sickle-leaved hare's ear)

Buttercup (Ranunculus)

Buxus (boxwood)

Calla lily (Zantedeschia, arum lily, trumpet lily)

Carnation (pinks, Dianthus, Sweet William, solomio)

Catmint (Nepeta mussinii)

Cestrum (Solanales, jessamine)

Chives (Allium schoenoprasum)

Clematis (part of Ranunculus family)

Coleus (Solenostemon, Indian borage, stinging thyme)

Cordyline (ti plant, cabbage tree)

Cotoneaster (rosaceae)

Cowslip

Crocosmia corms

Crocus (Spring crocus species, Iridaceae)

Cyclamen

Daffodils, flower and bulb (Narcissus, jonguil)

Dahlia

Daphne (Thymelaeaceae)

Elderberry (Sambucus)

Eucalyptus (gum tree)

Euonymus (wintercreeper, spindle)

Euphorbia (spurge)

Fern (Adiantum)

Gardenia (cape jasmine)

Gaultheria

Geranium (Cranesbill, pelargonium)

Giant marsh marigold (Caltha polypetala)

Gladioli bulb (sword lily)

Gypsophila (Baby's breath)

Helenium

Heliotrope (Boraginaceae)

Helleborus (Christmas rose, Easter rose,

Ranunculaceae)

Holly (Ilex)

Horse Chestnut (Aesculus hippocastanum)

Hosta (plaintain lily, funkia)

Hyacinths bulb

Hydrangea

Gypsophila

Hypericum (St John's Wort)

Iris (flag, snake lily)

Ivy (Hedera)

Juniper (Communis) berries

Lantana

Lavender (Lavandula)

Lemon verbena (Aloysia)

Lobelia (cardinal flower)

Lonicera (honeysuckle)

Lupin (Baptisia)

Malus (Crabapple/apple)

Marigold (tagete)

Mistletoe

Morning Glory (Convolvuceae)

Peony (Paeonia lactiflora)

Physalis (peruvian ground cherry,

nightshade)

Pieris (Japanese pieris, lily of the valley

bush, mountain fetterbush)

Poinsettia* (euphorbia, Christmas flower)

Polyanthus (primula, primrose)

Poppy (Papaver)

Privet (Ligustrum japonicum/vulgare)

Ranunculus

Rape

Rudbeckia (black eyed susan)

Ruscus (butcher's broom, asparagaceae)

Scilla (squills)

Snowdrop (Galanthus)

Tulips, bulb

Water iris (Psuedacorus)

Wisteria







Carnation Juniper berries

Cats and outdoor plants

Safe for cats

Acer (maple)

African daisy (Arctotis, Osteospermum)

Alyssum

Antirrhinum (snapdragon)

Argyranthemum (Marguerite)

Astilbe

Bacopa (Sutera cordata)

Betula (birch)

Buddleia (buddleja, butterfly bush)

Busy lizzies (impatiens, balsam, sultana)

Calendula (marigold asteraceae)

Camellia

Ceanothus (Californian lilac)

Catnip (nepeta cataria)

Celosia (cockscomb)

Chaenomeles (quince)

Choisya (Mexican orange blossom)

Cistus

Cornflower (Asteraceae, centaurea cyanus)

Cosmos

Cupressus leylandii (cypress)

Curry plant (Helichrysum italicum)

Dandelions

Diascias (Twinspur)

Echinacea (coneflower)

Echinops (globe thistle)

Fagus (beech)

Forsythia

Freesia

Fuschia

Gazania (treasure flower)

Gerbera (gerbera daisy)

Hawthorn

Helianthemum (rock rose)

Heuchera (coral bells)

Hollyhock

Ice plant succulent (Carpobrotus edulis)

Jasminium (Jasmine)

Lavatera (mallow)

Leucospermum

Lilac (Syringa)

Lisianthus (Eustoma)

Limonium (statice, sea lavender, caspia,

marsh-rosemary)

Magnolia

Moluccella (Bells of Ireland)

Myosotis (Forget me not)

Muscari (lily turf, grape hyacinth)

Nasturtium (Tropaeolum)

Nemesia

Nepeta cataria (catnip)

Nigella

Olive

Pansy (viola)

Petunias (Calibrachoa, Million bells)

Philadelphus (mock orange blossom)

Phlox

Photinia (red robin)

Pittosporum

Potentilla (cinquefoil)

Pussy willow (Salix)

Pyracantha

Rose

Rosemary



Rosemary

Sage (Salvia)

Scabiosa (Scabious)

Sedum (stonecrop)

Spirea

Stock (Brompton, common, hoary, gilly-flower, Matthiola incana)

Sunflowers (Helianthus)

Sword Fern (Nephrolepsis biserrata)

Trachelium (Throatwort)

Valeriana officinalis (Centranthus ruber)

Veronica (spike speedwell)

Viburnum Davidii

Viburnum tinus (Laurustinus)

Violets

Wallflower (erysimum)

Water lilies (Nyphaeaceae), not a true lily

Waxflower (Chamelaucium)

Weigela

Willow (Salix purpurea)

Zinnia



Ceanothus

Cats and indoor plants

Danger!

Cycad (Cycas revolute, Sago palm, Zamia, Fern palm)

Caution advised

Agave (Century plant)

Alocasia (Elephant ear, Dwarf taro)

Aloe vera (Liliaceae family)

Amaryllis (Hippeastrum)

Ant plant (Hydnophytum papuanum, Maze plant)

Anthurium (Flamingo flower)

Arrow head vine (African evergreen)

Asparagus fern* (feathery asparagus)

Bird of paradise (Strelitzia reginae/nicolai, Crane flower)

Begonia

Brunfelsia pauciflora (Kiss me quick; vesterday, today and tomorrow; Brazil raintree)

Caladium (Elephant's ears)

Calla lily (Zantedeschia, arum lily, trumpet lily)

Castanospermum (moreton bay chestnut, black bean. Australian chestnut)

Cheese plant* (Monstera, Indian ivy)

Chinese evergreen (Aglaonema)

Clusia (autograph tree)

Coleus (Solenostemon, Indian borage, stinging thyme)

Cyclamen

Dracaena (Corn plant, Dragon tree, lucky bamboo)

Dumb cane (Dieffenbachia), all varieties English ivy (Hedera Helix, common ivy)

Ficus benjamina (Benjamin tree, java fig, java tree, smallleaved rubber plant, tropic laurel, Indian rubber plant, weeping fig)

Fiddle leaf fig (Ficus lyrata, Banjo fig)

Fishtail palm* (Caryota mitis)

Gladioli bulb (sword lilv)

Homalomena rubescens (Red shield plant, Queen of hearts)

Hyacinths bulb

Iron Cross begonia (Begonia masoniana)

Jade plant (Crassula ovata, money plant)

Kalanchoe (Mother of thousands, panda plant, flaming Katy)

Peace lily (Spathiphyllum wallisii, White

Pencil cactus (Cactus euphorbia tirucalli, Cactus spurge)

Philodendron (scandens, Heart leaf, Sweetheart plant, Araceae, Monstera)

Poinsettia* (euphorbia, Christmas flower)

Polyscias fabian* (Dinner plate aralia, Plovscias aralia)

Pothos (Scindapsus, Devil's Ivy, Taro vine, Ivy arum)

Rubber plant (Ficus, Benjamin tree, weeping fig)

Schefflera (Umbrella tree, octopus tree)

Snake plant (Sanseviera, Mother in law's tongue, Viper's bowstring hemp)

Tradescantia* (Wandering Jew plant, Speedy Henry)

Yucca (Asparagaceae family, Agavoideae)

Zamioculcas zamiifolia (ZZ plant, Zanzibar gem, Fern arum)

Safe for cats

Aeschynanthus Japhrolepsis (Lipstick plant)

Aspidistra (Cast iron plant)

Boston Fern (Sword Fern, Nephrolepis exaltata)

Bromeliad (air plant)

Calathea (Zebra plant, Peacock plant, Rattle snake plant, prayer plant)

Chinese money plant (Alocasia portodora, Pilea Peperomioides, Pancake plant)

Christmas cactus (Schlumbergera, Easter cactus, November cactus)

Coconut palm (Cocus nucifera)

Crocodile Fern

Delosperma Echinatum

Fishbone cactus

Hoya (Wax plant)

Kentia palm (Howea forseriana, Thatch palm)

Maidenhair fern (Adiantum)

Money tree (pachira aquatica)

Musa dwarf Cavendish (Banana dwarf Cavendish)

Orchids

Parlour palm (Chamaedorea elegans, Bamboo palm)

Peperomia: various

Phlebodium Aureum (Harefoot palm, golden polypody)

Rex begonia vine (Cissus Dicolor)

Sedum

Spider plant (chlorophytum comosum, spider ivy, Ribbon plant)

String of hearts (Ceropegia woodii, Sweetheart vine)

Stromanthe

Zebra plant (Haworthia Fascinata)





Peperomia



Parlour palm

Cats and cut flowers

Danger!

Asiatic lily (Lilium x asiatica)

Convallaria (Lily of the Valley)

Easter lily (lilium longiforum)

Japanese showy lily (lilium hydridum)

Madonna lily (lilium candidum)

Roselily™*

Royal lily (lilium regale)

Rubrum lily (lilium rubrum)

Star of Bethlehem (Ornithogalum)

Stargazer lily, oriental lily (lilium orientalis)

Tiger lily (lilium lancifolium, tigrinum)

Western or wood lily (lilium umbellatum)

Senecio (daisy bush, Brachyglottis greyi)

Danger! Considered rare

Sweet Pea (Lathyrus)

Chrysanthemum

Delphinium (larkspur)



Heather, caution advised

Caution advised

Achillea (yarrow, milfoil, carpenter's weed)

Allium (ornamental onion, garlic, lily leek)

Alstroemeria* (Peruvian lily, Lily of Incas)

Amaryllis (Hippeastrum)

Ammi (Queen Anne's Lace, bullwort,

common bishop's weed)

Anemone (windflower)

Anthurium (flamingo flower)

Bird of Paradise (Strelitzia, Crane flower)

Broom (Cytisus)

 $\textbf{Bupleurum} \ (\textbf{Bulpleurum rotundifolium}$

Griffithii, hare's ear)

Calla Lily (Zantedeschia, trumpet lily, arum)

Carnation (Dianthus, clove pink)

Cestrum (Solanales, jessamine)

Clematis

Craspedia (Billy buttons)

Daffodil (Narcissus)

Dahlia

Euphorbia* (Spurge)

Gladiolus

Gloriosa (glory lily, flame lily)

Golden rod (Solidago)

Gypsophila (baby's breath)

Heather (Calluna vulgaris)

Hyacinth

Hydrangea

Iris (flag, snake lily)

Lavender (Lavandula)

Peony (Paeonia lactiflora)

Physalis alkekengi (winter cherry, chinese lantern)



Rose and limonium

Poppy (Papaver)

Ranunculus (Persian buttercup)

Scilla (Squill)

September flower (aster, Michelmas daisy)

Sweet William (Dianthus barbatus)

Tagetes (African Marigold)

Tanacetum (Tansy)

Tulip (Tulipa)

Foliage:

Asparagus Fern (Asparagus setaceus)

Eucalyptus

Salal (Gaultheria shallon)

Holly (Ilex)

Hypericum (St John's Wort)

Ivy (Hedera helix)

Privet (Liqustrum)

Ruscus (Ruscus aculeatus, soft ruscus and Ruscus hypophyllum, hard ruscus)

Safe for cats

Astilbe (false goatsbeard)

Camellia

Celosia (Cockscomb)

Cymbidium orchid

Dendrobium orchid

Echinops (globe thistle)

Freesia

Gerbera

Leucospermum (pincushion protea)

Lisianthus (Eustoma)

Limonium (statice, caspia, sea-lavender)

Bells of Ireland (Moluccella)

Muscari (grape hyacinth)

Oncidium orchid (golden shower orchid)

Phalaenopsis orchid (moth orchid)

Rose

Snapdragon (Antirrhinum)

Statice (see Limonium)

Stock (Matthiola)

Sunflower (Helianthus)

Trachelium caeruleum (Throatwort)

Vanda orchid

Veronica (speedwell)

Waxflower (Chamelaucium uncinatum)

Zinnia elegans

Foliage:

Olive (Olea europaea)

Pittosporum

Pussy willow (Salix caprea)

Rosemary

Sword Fern (Nephrolepis exaltata)

Cats, herbs and hedging

Herbs

Danger! Considered rare

Tansy (tancetum vulgare, Senicio, golden ragwort)

Caution advised

Anise

Bay leaf tree (Laurel nobilis)

Borage (starflower)

Catmint (Nepeta mussinii)

Caraway

Chamomile

Chives (Allium)

Feverfew

Garlic

Ginko (Ginkgo biloba)

Horseradish

Hyssop

Lavender (Lavendula)

Lemon grass

Lemon verbena (Aloysia)

Lovage

Marjoram (Origanum majorana)

Mint (Mentha)

Nettle (Urtica)

Oregano (Ooriganum)

Parsley (Petroselinum)

Sorrel (Rumex)

Tarragon (Estragon, artemesia)



Basil

Safe for cats

Basil (Ocimum)

Chervil

Coriander (cilantro)

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinalis)

Dill

Fennel

Germander (cat thyme, Teurcrium marum)

Ginger (Aplinia zerumbet)

Milk thistle

Nasturtium

Rosemary

Sage (Salvia)

Stevia (candyleaf)

Thyme

Valerian root

Woodruff (Galium odoratum)

Hedging

Danger! Considered rare

Cherry laurel (Prunus)

Prunus avium (wild cherry, sweet cherry, bird cherry)

Caution advised

Crab Apple hedging
Elder sambucus nigra
Lonicera nitida hedge plants
Lonicera pileata
Malus sylvestris hedge plants



Cherry laurel



Beech hedge

Safe for cats

Acer campestre hedging

Alder hedge plants

Alnus glutinosa

Amelanchier lamarckii

Beech hedge plants

Berberis julianae hedging

Blackthorn (sloe)

Box-leaved honeysuckle

Corylus avellana (hazel)

Cupressus macrocarpa 'Goldcrest'

Dog Rose (Rosa canina)

Dogwood (Cornus)

Elaeagnus x ebbingei hedge plants

Elaeagnus x ebbingei 'Limelight'

Escallonia 'Iveyi' and Donard Seedling

Fagus sylvatica 'Purpurea' hedging

Goat willow plants

Gorse hedging (Uulex europaeus)

Griselinia littoralis hedge plant

Guelder rose (Viburnum)

Hawthorn hedge plants

Hebe

Hornbeam (Sarpinus betulus)

Monterey cypress 'Goldcrest'

Pittosporum

Photinia

Pyracantha

Ribes sanguineum 'King Edward VII' hedge plants

Rosa rugosa 'Rubra' (Pink)

Rowan plant (Sorbus)

Western Red Cedar hedge plants

Cats and weeds

Danger! Considered rare

Common ragwort (Senecio jacobaea)

Docks Rrumex crispus)

Oxalis (wood sorrel, shamrock)

Caution advised

Achillea (yarrow, milfoil, carpenter's weed)

Bindweed (Convolvulus, calystegia sepium)

Bird's foot trefoil (Lotus corniculatus, eggs and bacon, birdsfoot deer vetch)

Creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens)

Daisy (Bellis perennis)

Enchanter's nightshade (Circaea lutetiana)

Evening primrose (Oenothera biennis)

Giant Hogweed (cow parsnip, Heracleum mantegazzianum)

Green alkanet (Bugloss, Pentaglottis sempervirens)

Ground elder (Bishop's weed, gout weed, Aegopodium podagraria)

Groundsel (Senecio vulgaris)

Knapweed (Centaurea nigra)

Lesser celandine (Pilewort, Ficaria verna)

Red clover (Trifolium pratense)

Scarlet pimpernel (Anagallis arvensis)

Sorrel (common, spinach dock, garden, Rumex scutatus)

White clover (Trifolium repens)

Safe for cats

Bittercress (Cardamine hirsuta, mustard family)

Cleavers (sticky willie, goosegrass, Galium aparine)

Common chickweed (winter weed, chickenwort, Stellaria media)

Common mouse ear (Cerastium alpinum)

Couch (Twitch, scutch, Elymus repens)

Creeping thistle (Cirsium arvense)

Cuckoo flower (Cardamine pratense)

Dandelions

Herb Robert (red robin, storksbill, Erodium cicutarium)

Horsetail (marestail, Equisetum arvense)

Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica)

Rosebay willowherb (fireweed, Chamaenerion angustifolium)

Slender speedwell (Veronica filiformis)

Wood avens (Herb bennet, Geum urbanum)



Daisy



For more information

There are now some great plant identifier apps for your smartphone, such as Picture This. You take a photo of a plant and it will identify it and give you lots of advice on how to care for it. It also gives you information regarding toxicity for pets.

Our research has been done via various veterinary advice websites but primarily the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) website aspca.com and books *A Guide to Poisonous House and Garden Plants* by Anthony P Knight and *Poisonous Plants* by Dietrick Frohne and Hans Jurgen Pfander.



There is a very helpful Facebook group consisting of international volunteer plant experts. It is for emergency help only, and they identify plants or mushrooms that a pet or human has ingested. This identification can then be used by doctors or vets to decide treatment. Search for 'Poisons Help; Emergency Identification for Mushrooms & Plants' on Facebook to join the group.



Why not bookmark our online lists of safe and unsafe flowers? Our research is ongoing and the lists are frequently updated and improved upon.

Scan to find out more

Or visit bit.ly/cats-plants



Making a better life for cats, because life is better with cats



cats.org.uk

Cats Protection is a registered charity 203644 (England and Wales), SC037711 (Scotland) and is listed as a Section 167 institution by the Charity Commission of Northern Ireland.