

## Common Christmas plants that are poisonous to pets

Many of us like to decorate our homes for the Christmas season with traditional plants and flowers.

Christmas decorations and plants are great for helping us get in the Christmas spirit. However, many of these can be dangerous to pets. Below is a list of some of the common plants and some of the symptoms they may give.

**Poinsettia:** The flower itself is not poisonous, but the sap that comes out of the leaves is. The sap may cause skin irritation, and if ingested may irritate the oral cavity, and cause a gastroenteritis. If the sap gets onto your pet immediately wash the area with soap and water, this will greatly reduce the likelihood of irritation.

**Mistletoe:** The berries of the mistletoe plant are poisonous; they can cause excessive salivation, gastroenteritis, increased breathing and heart rates, excessive urination. If ingested in sufficient quantities the reaction may be fatal.

**Holly:** The Berries from the holly plant are also poisonous, and gastrointestinal symptoms may be seen as a result of ingestion.

**Bittersweet:** The entire plant is toxic, although once again the berries are the most dangerous part. They contain a substance called solanine that can cause gastroenteritis, bradycardia (slow heart rate), sedation, respiratory distress and possible coma.

**Jerusalem Cherry:** The berries also contain solanine, with the above symptoms.

**Boxwood:** Boxwood twigs and leaves contain a substance called buxene, which can cause gastroenteritis, convulsions, and respiratory distress.

Remember pets are curious; puppies and kittens cannot resist the temptation to investigate their surroundings, and of course some of the above can be dangerous to children, so decorate your homes responsibly.

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