



Maine Farm Safety Program

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Poisonous Plants in and Around the Home

Poisonous plants are everywhere. More than 700 species of plants located in the United States and Canada have caused illness or death in humans. Plants with poisonous parts can be found in homes, flower gardens and vegetable gardens. Some ornamental shrubs and trees and a variety of wild plants common in yards, woods, swamps and fields can cause sickness and death.

Plants can be a poisonous hazard inside the home. Children need to be taught not to eat any part of a plant unless they have permission from a knowledgeable adult. Decorate with plants that are not poisonous. If you are uncertain of a plant's identity, take it to a nursery or florist for identification. It is a good idea to label plants found in the home and throw away leaves as they die and fall.

Children love to play with plants in the yard. Explain that plants can be played with, but not eaten. Mushrooms in the yard need to be picked and disposed of as soon as possible. Tell children not to eat them and that they are not the same mushrooms you buy in the grocery store.

Gardening is often a family activity. Until you use seeds and bulbs, store them safely out of reach of children. Explain that when the plants grow, the fruits and vegetables will be picked

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- **Many plants have poisonous parts. Know the poisonous plants in your area.**
- **Decorate with nonpoisonous plants.**



together. Children should not pick any vegetables or fruit without supervision. They may confuse good food with that which is harmful.

Do not use plants to make potions, medicines or tea unless you are trained in this area. Avoid smoke from burning plants. Ingesting plant products and inhaling plant smoke could be harmful.

If there is a suspected plant poisoning, immediately contact a physician or the Poison Control Center at 1-800-442-6305. Get a plant sample because it will aid in diagnosis and treatment. Answer all questions to the best of your knowledge, and follow the advice given by the Poison Control Center or physician.

A current list of poisonous plants is available from the Maine Poison Control Center at 1-800-442-6305. First aid information is also available.

This Maine Farm Safety fact sheet is part of an educational fact sheet series produced by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. For more information on farm safety, contact your county Extension office.

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