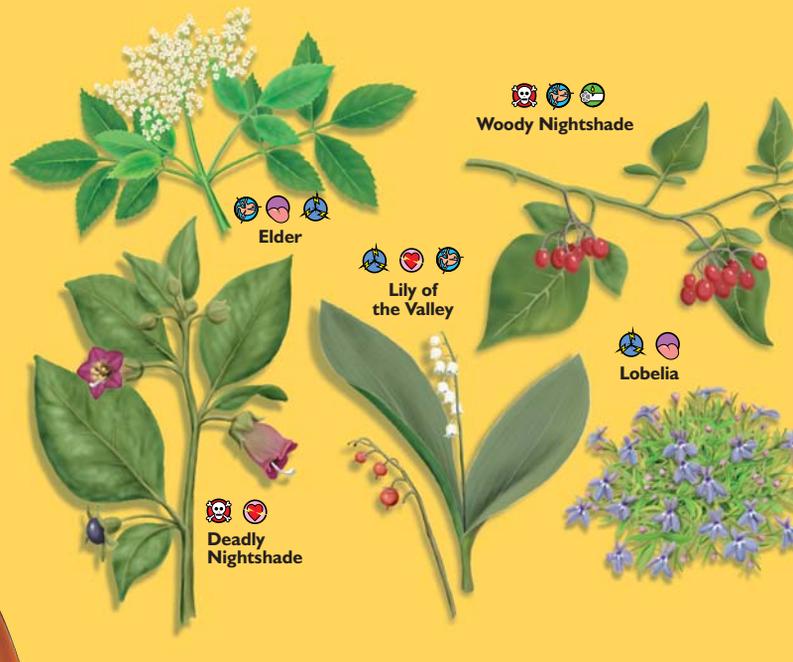


# A guide to Dangerous Plants



## Guide to Dangerous Plants

Feeding plants to your rabbits & guinea pigs can add variety and interest to their diets. Plants can provide some essential nutrients such as fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals that are essential to the animal's health. However, some plants can also be harmful to small animals if eaten, causing illness, distress, discomfort and potentially death. Rabbits and guinea pigs are natural herbivores and in the wild live on a variety of green plants, roots and fruits. Needless to say, they will enjoy some of these in their diet in captivity. You can become familiar with the plants that your small animal prefers and this guide will assist you in identifying plants that may be harmful to your pet, thereby avoiding potential dangers. You should be aware that small animals may not instinctively avoid poisonous plants.

If you are at all unsure of identifying safe plants and weeds in your garden, do not attempt to feed your pet with them as you may inadvertently feed a poisonous plant.

## What harm can plants do to small animals?

Eating poisonous plants can affect your pet in a variety of ways. Symptoms range from a stomach upset to possibly, death. Other symptoms include salivation, skin allergies and heart and breathing difficulties. Many small furries are incapable of vomiting, so harmful plants usually inducing this symptom may

go undiagnosed. They may undergo physiological stress after ingesting those which are irritating to the digestive tract. If your pet is running free, the garden can be a very dangerous place, particularly if you are not familiar with harmful plants.

## Dangerous Plants

The following are plants that are harmful to small animals. If you are unsure of what any of these plants look like, pictures can be found in books from your local library, or ask for advice at your local garden centre. Amongst the most poisonous are species such as: *anemone, azalea, bittersweet, bryony, caladium, cyclamen, columbine, dog mercury, figwort, deadly nightshade, woody nightshade, poppies, ragwort, buttercups, daffodils, bluebells, foxglove, hemlock, sparges, kingcup, marsh marigold, monkshood, meadow saffron, mistletoe, St. Johns wort, Leyland cypress, fools parsley and hellebore.*



Cardiovascular



Skin allergy



Salivation



Fatal



Toxic



Gastro Intestinal Irritation



Your garden may also contain cultivated plants that may cause illness such as: dahlias, lupins, chrysanthemums, delphinium, lily of the valley, tulips, iris, morning glory, antirrhinums, lobelia, fig, Jerusalem cherry, juniper, hyacinth, privet, yew, laburnum, lords and ladies, ivy, philodendron, rhododendron, wisteria, clematis, holly and most evergreen trees.

**Prevention**

If you have any of these plants in your garden there are a number of things you can do to prevent harm to your Rabbit or Guinea Pig. If your small animal has free run of the garden then you will need either to remove the plant or prevent the animal from eating it. Either surround the plant with chicken wire, or, if your animal is in a run, ensure the plant is not in contact with the wire as they may be able to reach through and nibble it. Always carefully identify any plants before you feed them to your small animal, as many harmful plants are similar in appearance to those that are not harmful.



**First Aid**

If you are in any doubt, do not feed or let your pet eat plants that you are unsure of. If your Rabbit or Guinea Pig becomes ill after being in the garden or after being fed plants and you suspect poisoning, a vet should be consulted immediately. Diagnosis of a particular poisoning can be difficult unless the rabbit is seen eating a specific plant. If so, the plant should be taken to the vet for assistance in diagnosis.

The vet may administer fluids and gut protectants and treat symptomatically. Try to keep the animal warm and quiet to comfort the animal and minimize shock. Fluids can be given if the animal is interested and may assist in diluting and flushing the agent through.

-  Cardiovascular
-  Skin allergy
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