

# Plants Reported to be Toxic When Ingested by Horses\*

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Plant Name(s)	Botanical Name/Family	Toxic Plant Parts	Symptoms
<b>American Persimmon</b>	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i> , Ebenaceae (Ebony family)	fruit skin, pulp, seeds	ulcers and even rupture of the stomach; severe colic; intestinal obstruction
<b>Angel's Trumpet**</b>	<i>Brugmansia suaveolens</i> ( <i>Datura suaveolens</i> ), Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	seeds	anorexia, weight loss, thirst, tachycardia, dilated pupils, diarrhea, excessive urination, and death
<b>Avocado</b>	<i>Persea americana</i> , Lauraceae (Laurel family)	leaves, bark, seeds, and skin of the fruit	edematous swelling of the lips, mouth, eyelids, head, and neck, which can cause upper respiratory distress; colic
<b>Black Locust</b>	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> , Fabaceae (Legume family)	bark, seeds	lectins poisoning; severe gastrointestinal irritation; vomiting and diarrhea; dilated pupils and cardiac arrhythmias
<b>Black Nightshade</b>	<i>Solanum nigrum</i> , Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	all parts	taxicardia, decreased salivation and intestinal motility, dilated pupils, and tachycardia; colic, constipation, or hemorrhagic diarrhea
<b>Black Walnut</b>	<i>Juglans nigra</i> , Juglandaceae (Walnut family)	unknown- roots, bark, nuts, and pollen of the walnut tree, is possibly involved	horses become poisoned if they are exposed to the wood shavings of black walnuts that are used for bedding. laminitis, edema of the lower legs, colic
<b>Bleeding Heart, Dutchman's Breeches</b>	<i>Dicentra spp.</i> , Fumariaceae (Fumatory family)	all parts	projectile vomiting, convulsions, and lateral recumbency
<b>Bracken Fern, Brake Fern, Eagle Fern</b>	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> , Polypodiaceae (Fern family)	fern poisoning in horses is uncommon	depression, muscle tremors, uncoordinated gait, especially of the hind legs and paralysis; colic, constipation, hemoglobinuria, severe anemia, elevated temperature, and rapid heart rate
<b>Buckeye, Horse Chestnut</b>	<i>Aesculus spp.</i> , Hippocastanaceae (Buckeye family)	young growing sprouts, leaves, immature fruit, and seeds	vomiting and gastroenteritis
<b>Castor Bean**</b>	<i>Ricinus communis</i> , Euphorbiaceae (Spurge family)	all parts; seeds most toxic	ricin toxin poisoning; severe gastrointestinal irritation; hemorrhagic diarrhea; dilated pupils and cardiac arrhythmias; death
<b>Choke-Cherry, Black Cherry**</b>	<i>Prunus spp.</i> , Rosaceae (Rose family)	seeds, leaves, bark, shoots; wilted leaves and new growth most toxic	fatal cyanide poisoning; rapid labored breathing, frothing at the mouth, dilated pupils, ataxia, muscle tremors, convulsions; death

<b>Common Boxwood**</b>	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , Buxaceae (Boxwood family)	all parts	1.5 lb of green leaves may be lethal to an adult horse; Severe gastroenteritis, colic, and hemorrhagic diarrhea; death results from respiratory failure
<b>Common Cockle Burr</b>	<i>Xanthium strumarium</i> , Asteraceae (Sunflower family)	two-leafed stage of the cockle burr and seeds; burs	liver poisoning; burs cause excessive salivation and mucosa ulcers
<b>Corn Cockle</b>	<i>Agrostemma githago</i> , Caryophyllaceae (Pink family)	seeds	gastrointestinal irritation and diarrhea
<b>Day-Blooming Jessamine</b>	<i>Cestrum diurnum</i> , Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	all parts	calcification of the elastic tissues of the arteries, tendons, and ligaments
<b>Dogbane, Indian Hemp</b>	<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i> , Apocynaceae (Dogbane family)	all parts	Abdominal pain, colic and diarrhea; rapid breathing, cold extremities, and a rapid, weak, and irregular pulse
<b>Field Bindweed, Morning Glory</b>	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i> , Convolvulaceae (Morning glory family)	all parts	colic; intestinal stasis and flatulence; slow heart rate and dilated pupils
<b>Flatweed, Cat's Ears</b>	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i> , Asteraceae (Sunflower family)	no specific toxin has been identified in flatweed	lameness syndrome characterized by high stepping and hyperflexion of the hind legs; difficulty in stepping backward
<b>Hoary Alyssum**</b>	<i>Berteroa incana</i> , Brassicaceae (Mustard family)	all parts; contaminated hay	stiffness, limb swelling, fever, diarrhea, laminitis, intravascular hemolysis, severe hypovolemic shock, and death; abortion or premature parturition
<b>Jimson Weed, Thornapple, Stinkweed**</b>	<i>Datura stramonium</i> ( <i>D. tatula</i> ), Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	seeds	increased heart and respiratory rate, muscle weakness, dilated pupils, colic, and watery diarrhea; death
<b>Kentucky Coffee Tree American Coffee Berry**</b>	<i>Gymnocladus dioica</i> , Fabaceae (Legume family)	new sprouts, leaves, and the fruits	gastrointestinal irritation, vomiting, colic, and diarrhea; hypotension, decreased heart and respiratory rates, muscle paralysis, convulsions; death
<b>Larkspur, Poison Weed</b>	<i>Delphinium spp.</i> , Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family)	all parts	muscle weakness; sudden collapse; rapid exhaustion; muscle twitching, abdominal pain, regurgitation, and constipation.
<b>Mayapple, Mandrake</b>	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i> , Berberidaceae (Barberry family)	all parts	colic and diarrhea; excessive salivation
<b>Milkweeds**</b>	<i>Asclepias spp.</i> , Asclepiadaceae (Milkweed family)	all parts; milky sap or latex	1.0 kg is lethal for adult horses; death in 8 to 10 hours
<b>Monkshood, Aconite**</b>	<i>Aconitum spp.</i> , Ranunculaceae (Buttercup family)	all parts	restless, salivate excessively, develop muscle weakness, hypotension; difficulty in breathing; death

<b>Mountain Laurel**</b>	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i> , Ericaceae (Heath family)	all parts	green frothy salivation, vomiting, colic, frequent defecation, depression, weakness, ataxia; death
<b>Oak</b>	<i>Quercus spp.</i> , Fagaceae (Oak family)	leaf and flower buds opening in spring; acorns	excessive thirst; frequent urination; diarrhea; intestinal stasis; teeth grinding and a hunched back
<b>Oleander**</b>	<i>Nerium oleander</i> , Apocynaceae (Dogbane family)	all parts; red flower varieties most toxic	severe gastrointestinal and cardiac signs of poisoning; death
<b>Peas, Sweet pea</b>	<i>Lathyrus spp.</i> , Fabaceae (Legume family)	seeds	osteolathyrism; skeletal deformities and aortic rupture
<b>Poison Hemlock, European Hemlock Spotted Hemlock**</b>	<i>Conium maculatum</i> , Apiaceae (Parsley family)	all parts; seeds highly toxic	salivation, abdominal pain, muscle tremors, and incoordination; difficulty in breathing, dilated pupils, weak pulse, and frequent urination and defecation; death
<b>Pokeweed, Pokeberry**</b>	<i>Phytolacca americana</i> , Phytolaccaceae (Pokeweed family)	all parts	oral irritation, excessive salivation, vomiting, colic, bloody diarrhea, depression, prostration, and death
<b>Rattlebox**</b>	<i>Crotalaria spp.</i> , Fabaceae (Legume family)	all parts; seeds most toxic	liver disease and photosensitization; death
<b>Red Maple</b>	<i>Acer rubrum</i> , Aceraceae (Maple family)	wilted or dried leaves, especially in Fall; bark	acute hemolytic anemia; weakness, increased respiratory and heart rates, cyanosis, icterus, and a red-brown coloration of the urine; abortion
<b>Rhododendron (Azalea)**</b>	<i>Rhododendron spp.</i> , Ericaceae (Heath family)	all parts; nectar	anorexia, excessive salivation, vomiting, colic, and frequent defecation; muscle weakness, bradycardia, cardiac arrhythmia, weakness, paralysis, and coma; death
<b>Senecio, Groundsel, tansy ragwort</b>	<i>Senecio spp.</i> , Asteraceae (Sunflower family)	all parts	chronic liver disease over a period of 6 or more months.
<b>Senna, Coffee Weed, Coffee Senna, Sickle Pod</b>	<i>Cassia occidentalis</i> ( <i>Senna occidentalis</i> ), <i>Cassia obtusifolia</i> , ( <i>Senna obtusifolia</i> ), Fabaceae (Legume family)	all parts	afebrile and severely ataxic and may die; acute liver degeneration
<b>Sesbania, Coffee Weed, Bladderpod</b>	<i>Sesbania spp.</i> ( <i>Daubentonia</i> and <i>Glottidium</i> ), Fabaceae (Legume family)	all parts, seeds most toxic	severe hemorrhagic diarrhea; anorexia, abdominal pain, dehydration, and prostration
<b>Silver Leaf Nightshade, White Horse Nettle, Tropicillo**</b>	<i>Solanum elaeagnifolium</i> , Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	all parts, particularly ripe yellow berries	horses that have recently been treated with the antiparasitic drug ivermectin develop a neurotoxicity; drooling saliva, drooping lips and ears, and head pressing; death

<b>Sneezeweed, Bitterweed</b>	<i>Helenium autumnale</i> , Asteraceae (Sunflower family)	all parts	sneezing and vomiting; weight loss, vomiting, and secondary inhalation pneumonia
<b>Sudan grass, Johnson grass</b>	<i>Sorghum halepense</i> , Poaceae (Gramineae) (Grass family)	all parts; cyanide poisoning when grass is stressed	posterior ataxia, urinary incontinence, cystitis, and weight loss
<b>Tobacco**</b>	<i>Nicotiana spp.</i> , Solanaceae (Nightshade family)	leaves	rapid heart rate, salivation, vomiting, colic, and diarrhea; muscle weakness, staggering, collapse of the front legs, and a rapid, weak, and irregular heart rate; respiratory paralysis, blindness, prostration, coma, and death
<b>Water Hemlock, Cowbane, Poison Parsnip**</b>	<i>Cicuta maculate</i> , Apiaceae (Parsley family)	all parts, particularly the tuberous roots	8 oz is lethal for adult horses; muscle tremors and violent convulsions; excessive salivation, vigorous chewing movements, teeth grinding, frequent urination, and defecation are common; death in 2 to 3 hours
<b>White Snakeroot**</b>	<i>Eupatorium rugosum</i> , Asteraceae (Sunflower family)	all parts; milk from lactating animals	initially listless, depressed, lethargic, and disinclined to move; choking; patchy sweating; irregular heart rate; death
<b>Yew**</b>	<i>Taxus species</i> , Taxaceae (Yew family)	leaves	8 to 16 oz of yew leaves is lethal for adult horses; muscle trembling, incoordination, nervousness, difficulty in breathing, slow heart rate, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, and death

\* The above table lists common plants known to be toxic when ingested by horses. While this is not a complete list, it contains many plants commonly found in pastures and landscapes in Georgia. Horses generally will not consume the majority of these plants unless deprived of their normal forages.

\*\*Reported to be fatal when ingested in quantity.

### References:

Knight, Anthony P. and Walter, Richard G. A Guide to Plant Poisoning of Animals in North America. Jackson, WY: The Innovative Health Science Publisher; 2001.

Plants & Weeds Toxic to Horses. North Carolina Cooperative Extension, NC: Online; 2006.

<<http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/copubs/ag/livestock/horse/002/>>

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