**Abrus precatorius — Jequirity Pea, Precatory Bean**

**Guide to potentially dangerous plants.**

POISONOUS PARTS — The red and black seeds which contain a toxin, abrin, similar to snake venom. It begins to act in 12–72 hours.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, diarrhea, drowsiness, weakness, weak and fast pulse, circulatory collapse, coma and death.

The seed coat must be cracked before danger occurs; intact seeds will pass harmlessly through the digestive tract. However, a single damaged seed may be sufficient to kill a child.

Seeds of Abrus are frequently used in jewelry, dolls and other souvenirs of the tropics.
$Aconitum$ spp. — Monkshood

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a number of poisonous substances. The roots are particularly virulent.

SYMPTOMS — Tingling of the tissues of the mouth followed by numbness; a sensation of warmth in the stomach; nausea, frequently without vomiting; slowing of the pulse and respiration. Death may follow within a few hours of ingestion.

Monkshood is an ornamental garden perennial growing to 3 feet; its blossoms are deep blue or purple, and occasionally yellow or white. The common name aptly describes the blossom form.
POISONOUS PARTS — The roots and berries are the most poisonous parts.

SYMPTOMS — Severe stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhea.

Baneberry is a perennial herb sometimes cultivated in the garden; when in fruit it is conspicuous in the woods. All species are poisonous.
Arisaema triphyllum — Jack-in-the-Pulpit

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate, as well as other chemicals.

SYMPTOMS — An intensely painful burning sensation in the mouth and throat, accompanied by swelling of the soft tissue in these areas; vomiting and diarrhea sometimes occur. Death may result from blockage of the windpipe due to swelling of the surrounding tissues.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit is a common plant in partly shaded, wet woods. The clusters of red fruits are conspicuous in the fall. Children sometimes eat the swollen underground base or the fruits.
Buxus spp. — Box, Boxwood

POISONOUS PARTS — The leaves and twigs contain a number of poisonous substances, including buxene.

SYMPTOMS — Stomach pains, diarrhea, vomiting, convulsion; and in extreme cases, death.

Box is commonly used as an evergreen hedging or edging plant in gardens from Boston southward. All species are poisonous.
Caladium spp.

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate, as well as other chemicals.

SYMPTOMS — An intensely painful burning sensation in the mouth and throat, accompanied by swelling of the soft tissue in these areas; vomiting and diarrhea sometimes occur. Death may result from blockage of the windpipe due to swelling of the surrounding tissues.

Caladiums are plants commonly grown in summer for their colorful, variegated leaves. They also are sometimes used as house plants.

All species are poisonous.
Caltha palustris — Marsh Marigold

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a volatile oily substance called protoanemonin, which acts as an irritant to the skin or mucous membranes. In addition, several alkaloids may be involved.

SYMPTOMS — Irritation and inflammation of the soft tissue of the mouth, salivation, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Symptoms of alkaloid poisoning, such as nervousness and depression, also may occur.

Common to marshes and wet areas, Marsh Marigold is conspicuous in early spring for its showy, yellow flowers.
POISONOUS PARTS — The plants produce a resinous substance with narcotic properties.

SYMPTOMS — Exhilaration, delusion, blurred vision, loss of coordination, drowsiness and coma result from any form of ingestion.

Marijuana is found as a weed in waste ground.

Federal and state laws presently regulate the possession of Cannabis in any form.
Celastrus spp. — Bittersweet

POISONOUS PARTS — Leaves, bark and the attractive fruits with contrasting color of seeds and flesh.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, chills and coma.

Bittersweet is a native, woody, deciduous vine often encountered wild as well as in cultivation. Its showy fruits are commonly collected in the fall for dried arrangements which should not be accessible to small children.

All species are poisonous.
Cicutia maculata — Water Hemlock

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts, particularly the roots, contain a yellowish viscid fluid or resinous solid called cicutoxin.

SYMPTOMS — Occur within 15–45 minutes, beginning with excessive salivation, then tremors of the limbs and sudden and violent convulsions. Unconsciousness and death follow.

Water Hemlock may be a weed of hedgerows, ditches, or field margins. It is readily recognized by its clusters of thickened roots, the series of diaphragms of the pith at the base of the stem, and drops of yellow, oily fluid which secrete on surfaces of cut tissue.
Colchicum autumnale — Autumn Crocus

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts of the plant are equally and intensely poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Burning pain in the mouth, intestinal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, reduced pulse, coldness of the extremities and prostration.

Autumn Crocus is commonly grown for its showy lavender flowers appearing without leaves in the fall. It is advertised for forcing to bloom without soil or water on a windowsill and thus is an object of curiosity to a small child.
Conium maculatum — Poison Hemlock

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a poisonous volatile oil called coniine.

SYMPTOMS — Occur within 15–45 minutes. Muscular weakness, dizziness, disordered vision, loss of muscular control and sensation in the extremities.

Poison Hemlock is a fairly common weed of hedges, ditches and waste land. The plant bears a resemblance to Queen Anne’s Lace or Wild Carrot in its white flowers, but is smooth throughout, not hairy. It has an unpleasant odor variously described as “mousey” or like cat urine; its taste also is offensive.
Convalaria majalis — Lily-of-the-Valley

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts (leaves, flowers, berries, and underground portions) contain a poisonous substance called convallarin.

SYMPTOMS — The pulse and heart beat are slowed; vomiting and diarrhea may occur.

Lily-of-the-Valley is a common garden perennial or ground cover grown for its sweet-scented white flowers in spring. The red berries in late summer and fall are attractive to small children.
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are highly toxic.

SYMPTOMS — Skin blisters from the juice; blisters of the soft tissues of the mouth from plant portions chewed and/or swallowed. Vomiting and diarrhea, with blood or mucus are common.

Two or three fruits may contain enough of the acrid juice to be fatal to a child.

Daphne is a shrub commonly grown for its fragrant lilac-pink flowers in early spring. The white, or red fruits are attractive to children.

_Daphne cneorum_, Rose Daphne, with spreading stems, evergreen leaves, and clusters of pink flowers in spring is equally injurious.
Datura spp. —
Jimson Weed, Thorn Apple, Angel’s Trumpet

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain several alkaloids which act on the human system. Approximately an ounce of any plant part constitutes the lethal dose for a child. Dust from seed pods causes what is called "corn picker’s eye", a persistent dilatation of the pupils.

SYMPTOMS — Intense thirst and disturbance of vision; rapid pulse and high blood pressure; delirium, violence, convulsion, coma, death.

Jimson Weed, Datura stramonium, is a common weed in rich soils around manure piles, animal enclosures, and the like. Several other species with large, white, trumpet-shaped flowers are cultivated in gardens for ornament and also are poisonous.
POISONOUS PARTS — Seeds and young plants contain substantial quantities of several harmful alkaloids.

SYMPTOMS — Salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsion, coma.

Delphinium and Larkspur are commonly cultivated, usually blue-flowered annuals or short-lived garden perennials. Mature plants and flowers are less toxic than the young plants and seeds.

All species are poisonous.
Dieffenbachia spp. — Dumb Cane

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate, as well as other chemicals.

SYMPTOMS — An intensely painful burning sensation in the mouth and throat, accompanied by swelling of the soft tissue in these areas. Vomiting and diarrhea also may occur. Death may result from blockage of the windpipe due to swelling of the surrounding tissue.

Commonly cultivated house plants often with variegated leaves, Dieffenbachias are recommended for areas of low light intensity. They should be kept out of the reach of small children. All species are poisonous.
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts (including the seeds) contain a number of harmful substances.

SYMPTOMS — Nausea and vomiting and a very slow pulse, followed somewhat later by rapid and/or erratic heart beat.

Foxglove is a common garden biennial or short-lived perennial. Children sometimes pick the drooping tubular flowers and suck the nectar from their base. This is a practice which should be discouraged.
Euonymus spp. —
Burning Bush, Spindle Tree, Wahoo

POISONOUS PARTS — Leaves, bark and the attractive fruits with contrasting color of seeds and flesh.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, chills and coma.

Euonymus are shrubs or evergreen vines; their fruits are frequently collected in the fall and used for dried arrangements. Such arrangements should be kept out of the reach of small children.

All species are poisonous.
*Euphorbia marginata* — Snow-on-the-Mountain

*Euphorbia pulcherrima* — Poinsettia
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a milky juice composed of substances which may cause mild to severe dermatitis.

SYMPTOMS — Rash or blistering of the skin; severe irritation of the mouth, throat, and stomach; vomiting and diarrhea.

Snow-on-the-Mountain is cultivated in the garden as a hardy annual. The leaves are commonly variegated or white on the margins.

Although the florist's Poinsettia is probably one of the least noxious Euphorbias, its seasonal abundance and availability in the home make it important. It should be placed where small children cannot reach it.

Crown of Thorns is a spiny house plant bearing clusters of red flowers.
**Hedera helix — English Ivy, Baltic Ivy**

**POISONOUS PARTS** — The leaves and berries contain a substance which may cause poisoning.

**SYMPTOMS** — Excitement, labored breathing, diarrhea, and coma.

English Ivy has numerous forms, some hardy and used as ground covers, or to climb on brick walls; others, not hardy, are grown as house plants.
Ilex spp. — Holly

POISONOUS PARTS — Leaves and berries contain a bitter substance.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting and diarrhea; stupor.

Berried sprigs of Holly are commonly used as household decorations during the Christmas season. As they dry, the leaf and berry stalks become very brittle, shedding freely. Great care should be taken that small children do not eat the tempting berries.

Hollies are woody shrubs or trees, evergreen or deciduous, which are cultivated for their berries, and for general landscape purposes.

All species are poisonous.
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts, including the flowers, are poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Salivation, vomiting, staggering walk, convulsions, difficult breathing, paralysis.

Mountain Laurel is a popular cultivated evergreen shrub bearing large clusters of white and pink blossoms in spring. *K. angustifolia* and *K. polifolia*, Lambkill and Bog Laurel, respectively, are common in the wild in New England and also are potentially toxic. Children have been poisoned by sucking on the flowers to obtain nectar “honey” or by making a play “tea” from the leaves.
Laburnum spp. — Golden Chain Tree

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts, but particularly the flowers and seeds, contain a substance called cystine.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, convulsions; in severe cases, death.

A member of the Pea family, this as all others should be regarded with suspicion. While garden beans and peas are wholesome and nutritious, the seeds and/or foliage of many such as Precatory Bean, Wisteria, Lupine, and Loco Weeds are definitely injurious or cause fatality.

The Laburnum is a showy shrub or small tree. Its clusters of pendant, yellow flowers have prompted its popular name. All species are poisonous.
POISONOUS PARTS — Leaves and fruits. The green, unripened fruit is most virulent.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting and diarrhea, muscular weakness, collapse.

Lantana is a tropical shrub commonly cultivated in the house and out-of-doors. In the north, berries are not usually produced in the house, but outside in summer they may be plentiful. Children should be discouraged from eating them.
Ligustrum spp. — Privet

POISONOUS PARTS — Leaves and berries may cause problems.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting and diarrhea.

Privet is a common shrub used for hedges. Clippings should not be left lying on the ground and children should be discouraged from putting either the leaves or the fruits in their mouths.

All species are poisonous.
Narcissus spp. — Daffodil

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain active principles.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, diarrhea, trembling, convulsions.

Daffodils are bulbous plants widely cultivated for their yellow flowers in early spring. The juice of the leaves and flower stalks also may cause a dermatitis.

All species are poisonous.
Nerium oleander — Oleander

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are toxic. A single leaf is potentially a lethal dose for an adult.

SYMPTOMS — Nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, weakness, abnormal heart beat, and coma, usually beginning several hours after ingestion. Death may follow within 24 hours.

Oleander is a shrub commonly cultivated in warm temperate regions for its flowers. It is occasionally grown as a large house plant in the north.
Philodendron spp.

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain needle-like crystals of calcium oxalate, as well as other chemicals.

SYMPTOMS — An intensely painful burning sensation in the mouth and throat, accompanied by swelling of the soft tissues in this area. Vomiting and diarrhea also may occur. Death may result from blockage of the windpipe due to swelling of the surrounding tissues.

Philodendrons, both the climbing and rosette forms, are commonly used in the home and in public buildings to produce an "exotic" effect in areas of low light intensity. In the home, at least, they should be placed out of reach of small children and pets.

All species are poisonous.
Phoradendron serotinum — Mistletoe

POISONOUS PARTS — The white berries are particularly toxic.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, coma.

Sprigs of Mistletoe are used for Christmas decoration. As they dry, the stalks of berries and leaves become brittle and shed readily. They should be placed so that small children cannot obtain the detached berries.
Phytolacca americana — Pokeberry

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Burning sensation in the mouth. In one to two hours, stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea, prostration, salivation, dimness of vision, and convulsions.

A common herbaceous weed in disturbed areas, Pokeberry may grow to 8 feet in height.

The young shoots (6–12 inches long) when boiled in two changes of water are considered good greens for the table. The berries are attractive to children because of the "squashy" consistency and deep purple stain. However, three or four berries may sicken a child and ten can seriously affect an adult. Allegedly, they are edible when cooked.
Prunus virginiana — Chokecherry

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a substance which can be converted to hydrocyanic acid. Particularly dangerous are the bark and wilted leaves.

SYMPTOMS — Difficulty in breathing, paralysis, prostration, convulsions, coma, and death.

Since the wilted leaves are most dangerous, broken and pruned branches and twigs should be gathered and disposed of. The flesh of the fruit is safe (though “puckery”); the kernels of the seeds should be avoided.

Chokecherries, weedy trees growing to 10 feet, usually are found along roadsides and in disturbed areas; they sometimes are cultivated.
Ranunculus spp. — Buttercup

POISONOUS PARTS — Stems and leaves contain a number of substances which may irritate the mouth and stomach. The juice also may blister the skin of sensitive persons.

SYMPTOMS — Irritation of mouth and throat, excessive salivation, colic, diarrhea, depression, slow pulse.

Buttercup is an herb, usually bearing bright yellow flowers, which is most common in wet meadows. The leaves may be mottled with silver and usually are much dissected.

All species are poisonous.
Rheum rhaponticum — Rhubarb

POISONOUS PARTS — The green, expanded, leaf blade contains calcium oxalate.

SYMPTOMS — Stomach pain, vomiting, weakness, coma and death result from large amounts. Muscular weakness and twitching, slowed respiration, weak pulse, coma, and death occur from small amounts.

Rhubarb is a commonly cultivated vegetable. Leaf blades must not be eaten either raw or cooked under any circumstances.
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts, including the flowers, are poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Salivation, vomiting, staggering walk, convulsions, difficulty in breathing; collapse.

Rhododendrons and azaleas are commonly cultivated shrubs. Children may be poisoned by sucking the flowers to obtain nectar ("honey") or by making a play "tea" from the leaves. All species are poisonous.
Rhus radicans — Poison Ivy

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts contain a sap containing a chemical which may cause allergic dermatitis; the irritant also is carried by smoke.

SYMPTOMS — Itching, redness of the skin, small blisters. In severe cases the blisters may become quite large and local swelling of the flesh may occur.

If the sap is removed immediately from the skin by washing with strong soap, the dermatitis may be prevented or at least reduced.

Poison Ivy is a woody shrub or vine with changeable appearance; it is harmful at all seasons, and should never be placed in the mouth.

Poison Sumac (Rhus vernix) grows in wet areas and bears greenish flowers and white fruit. It should not be confused with other plants called Sumac which have red fruit and are harmless.

Poisonous species of Rhus also are known as Toxicodendron.
Ricinus communis — Castor Bean

POISONOUS PARTS — Although all parts are poisonous, the seeds are the most toxic.

SYMPTOMS — Burning sensation in the mouth and throat, vomiting, stomach pains, prostration, convulsions and death.

Ricin, the poisonous principle, is one of the most toxic of plant poisons. One to three seeds are sufficient to kill a child, four to eight will kill an adult.

Castor Bean is an annual plant cultivated for its large leaves and spiny, often colorful seed pods. It may be grown safely if the flower clusters are removed. Do not allow children access to packets containing the seeds.
POISONOUS PARTS — Young leaves, seeds and the inner bark.

SYMPTOMS — Flushed face, vomiting, diarrhea, reduced heart action, coldness of legs and arms, stupor.

Black Locust is a large tree, sometimes cultivated, and sometimes found growing wild in dry wooded areas and along road-sides. It bears pendulant clusters of white flowers. Children may be poisoned by sucking the flowers or by chewing twigs.
POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Burning sensation, vomiting, thirst, dizziness, prostration.

Bloodroot is frequently cultivated for its white flowers which precede the leaves in early spring; in the wild it appears in rich woodlands. The blood red sap is a conspicuous feature of its leaves, stems, and roots when broken.
POISONOUS PARTS — Unripe tubers which have turned green from exposure to light; "sprouts" from the tubers.

SYMPTOMS — Headache, colic, vomiting, diarrhea; pupils of the eyes may or may not be dilated; mental confusion, stupification, coma.

Except for known edible fruits or tubers, all parts of all members of the Potato family should be regarded with suspicion.
Solanum pseudocapsicum — Jerusalem Cherry

Solanum nigrum — Black Nightshade
Solanum dulcamara — Deadly Nightshade

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are potentially dangerous but the unripe fruits are most toxic.

SYMPTOMS — Headache, colic, vomiting, diarrhea; pupils of the eyes may or may not be dilated; mental confusion; stupification; coma.

The Jerusalem Cherry is a favorite holiday plant with fruits resembling cherry tomatoes.

Black Nightshade is a weedy annual with small white flowers and shiny black berries.

Deadly Nightshade is a sprawling shrub or herbaceous vine simultaneously bearing small purplish flowers and red berries.

These, like all other members of the Potato family, should be regarded with suspicion unless known to be edible.
**Taxus spp. — Yew**

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts except the fleshy red covering around the seed.

SYMPTOMS — Vomiting and diarrhea, trembling, difficult breathing, weakness, convulsion, coma, death.

Yew is a commonly cultivated evergreen used for hedges and plantings. The foliage is poisonous; therefore hedge clippings should be gathered and disposed of. Because of the potential toxicity of the seed, children should not be encouraged to eat the red, fleshy covering.

All species are poisonous.
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Urtica dioica — Nettle

POISONOUS PARTS — Stinging hairs on leaves and stems.

SYMPTOMS — Rash on the skin.

Nettle is a weedy herbaceous perennial found in rich soil, along roadsides, and in waste places.
Veratrum viride — False Hellebore

POISONOUS PARTS — All parts are poisonous.

SYMPTOMS — Burning sensation in the mouth and throat; salivation; prostration; shortness of breath; slowed heart-beat and lowered blood pressure.

A coarse herb, 3–8 feet tall, commonly found in wet areas. The large basal leaves may resemble those of Skunk Cabbage.
Wisteria spp.

POISONOUS PARTS — Seed pods and seeds.

SYMPTOMS — Stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhea.

Wisteria is a woody vine commonly grown for its pendulant clusters of flowers in the spring. This, like all other members of the Pea family, should be regarded with suspicion. While garden beans and peas are wholesome and nutritious, the seeds and/or foliage of many others such as Precatory Bean, Lupine, and Loco Weeds are definitely injurious or fatal.