



# Poison Prevention

## Newsletter Summer 2005

SONY Upstate Medical University  
University Hospital • 750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

### Please Don't Eat the Daisies

By Lee Livermore

**Houseplants** are an essential part of home and office decor. However, while adding both color and beauty to the home, they may present a hazard, especially to young children or pets. This does not mean that you should rid your home of all plants but it is important to know that some plants pose a potential danger.

"**Poisonous Plants**" is one of our most popular brochures. It lists 100 Poisonous Plants in the U.S. and Canada. You might be surprised to find plants such as aloe, potato, and asparagus listed along with bleeding heart, lilies, and mushrooms. Although these are common plants

*Continued on page 3*



### Poisons In The Air We Breathe

By Lee W. Livermore BA, Health Educator

During the summer months, we spend more time outdoors, breathing in the fresh air. But, just how safe is the air we breathe?

#### Secondhand Smoke

Research indicates that the health risks associated with exposure to secondhand smoke are clear, convincing, and overwhelming. With over 4,000 known chemical compounds found in secondhand smoke, smoking affects not only the smoker but, anyone who comes in contact with the smoke.

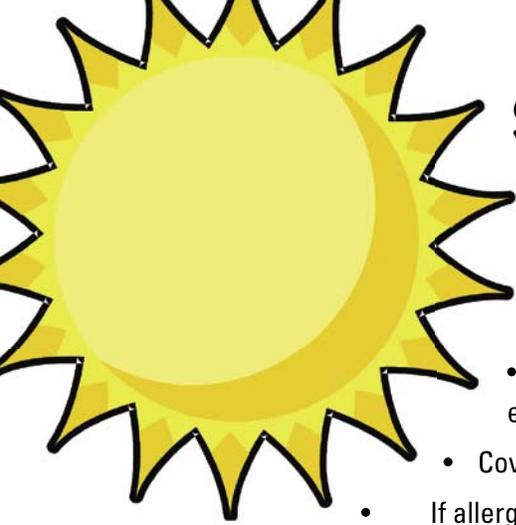
#### Gas Grills

All fossil fuels, such as butane and propane used in gas grills, give off carbon monoxide when burned. Avoid using gas grills in closed areas such as a garage or a tent. Breathing in these fumes can cause a carbon monoxide poisoning. Be sure that there is adequate ventilation before you fire up the grill.

*Continued on page 3*



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Poison information?  
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www.cnypoison.org**



# Summer Safety

Pack up the picnic basket and head outdoors to enjoy the fun that the summer season brings. Before you go, make sure to guard yourself against the pesky creatures and toxic plants that can cause itching and scratching!

- Pack insect repellent and apply as directed.
- Light citronella candles to ward off bugs during barbecues and other outside events.
- Cover food and beverages so bees are not attracted.
- If allergic to bee stings carry an Epikit (a bee sting emergency kit). Available by prescription.

Those who experience tightness in the chest, breathing problems or nausea following a bee/wasp sting should seek emergency treatment.

- Learn what toxic plants look like so you can avoid them.
- Show children pictures of plants to avoid. Discuss them in advance of outdoor trips. Make sure toddlers understand not to eat any plants.
- Wear gloves when gardening or cleaning gardening equipment. Rinse equipment with water for five minutes if you suspect that it may have come into contact with any toxic plants.
- Relieve painful itching from poison ivy, oak or sumac with a topical anesthetic creme or spray. Scratching can lead to secondary infections.
- See a physician immediately if poison ivy reaction occurs in a sensitive area, such as eyes, mouth or groin, if symptoms persist for more than 20 days or if reaction is accompanied by nausea, vomiting or stomach cramps.

Call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222 if you have any questions or concerns about an insect bite or a repellent product.

*Reference: Article by Dr. Stephen Pennisi, toxicologist and itch expert at the Lanacane Itch Information Center, for more information go to [www.lanacane.com](http://www.lanacane.com).*



# Poisons In The Air We Breathe

Continued from page 1

## Brush Burning

Poison ivy can grow just about anywhere, but is often found around trees and other shrubbery. Burning it can force the urushiol oil into the respiratory system causing serious allergic reactions affecting the nose, throat and lungs. If you believe you have inhaled smoke from burning poison ivy, see a doctor immediately. An allergic reaction can have serious results.

## POISON PREVENTION WORD FIND

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### List of words:

- MOUTHWASH
- MEDICINE
- PERFUME
- BLEACH
- ALCOHOL
- PLANTS
- LEAD
- VITAMINS
- CLEANERS
- OIL
- DETERGENT
- ROACH SPRAY



## Pesticides

Pesticides are commonly used to rid our homes and gardens of weeds and bugs. The potential hazards of pesticides are often overlooked. Exposure calls to the poison center involving pesticide are usually due to improper handling, mixing, and application of pesticides, or failure to use proper personal protective equipment and clothing. When handling pesticides take time to read and follow label directions carefully.

## Please Don't Eat the Daisies

Continued from page 1

found in your home and garden, certain parts of the plants can be toxic.

The aloe plant is often referred as "the healing cactus". Although, it can be used as a topical ointment or cream for first aid purposes, most people are unaware that in its original form the latex, or dried juice, contains toxins which can cause irritation, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.

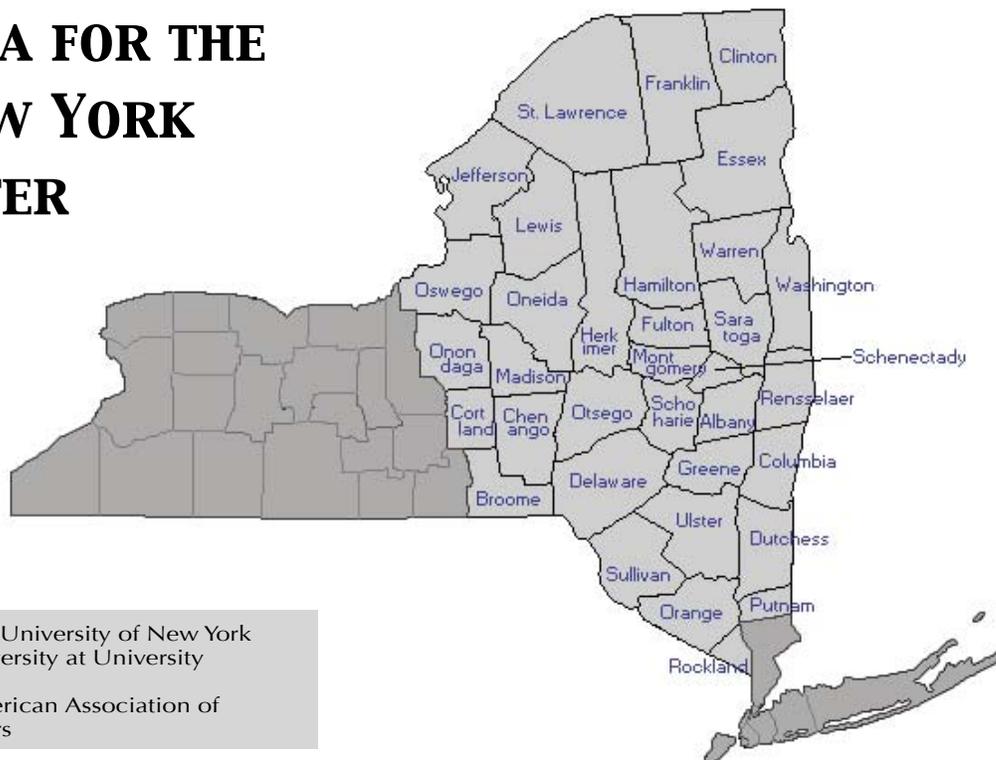
The potato plant contains a small amount of the toxin, solanine. Toxic exposure occurs through ingestion of the leaves, fruits and uncooked sprouts, which causes symptoms such as headache, vomiting and diarrhea. The best way to avoid exposure is to remove sprouts before cooking. Peel and boil "greening" potatoes and to discard the skins, eyes and sprouts in a way that children and pets are not likely to eat them.

"Asparagus" refers to the plant we commonly purchase at the grocery store as well as several other species of asparagus plants that contain toxic properties. The asparagus we eat is rich in vitamin A and ascorbic acid. However, during its flowering period the berries it produces can be toxic and cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea if ingested.

It is up to you to know the plants in your home that are potential hazards. It is a good idea for children to be taught at an early age to keep unknown plants and plant parts out of their mouths, as they can be poisonous.

If you would like a copy of the poisonous plants brochure or other poison prevention materials, please call the public health educator at 315-464-5375 to order. You can also visit our website at [www.cnypoison.org](http://www.cnypoison.org) and download free information.

# CALLING AREA FOR THE CENTRAL NEW YORK POISON CENTER



A Service of the State University of New York  
Upstate Medical University at University  
Hospital, Syracuse.  
A Member of the American Association of  
Poison Control Centers

## Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You..At Any Age!

To receive your **FREE** telephone stickers, magnets, and information brochures, dial 1-800-222-1222 ask for the Health Educator at The Central New York Poison Center.