



Christmas Plants

Enjoy the Holidays...Beware of Hazards!



The Upstate New York Poison Control Center reports that 20% of all calls to the Poison Control Center involve plants. Holiday plants make ideal gifts but in giving a plant to family with young children or pets, make known the name of the plant and it's potential toxicity. Let us help you to prevent plant poisonings with some holiday tips. Remember, if you even think a poisoning has occurred, call us!

Pointsettia

This Christmas flower has received an unfavorable reputation over the years. Research shows that only ingestion of very large amounts of this plant may be harmful. The milky sap from the plant may however cause dermatitis.

Holly

The stiff green leaves and bright red berries are often very attractive to children. Holly berries are highly toxic. Ingestion of twenty or so berries could result in death.

Bittersweet

All parts of this plant are toxic. The unripe berry contains the highest concentration of solanine, which can cause heart rate below 60, drowsiness and headaches.

Pines

Parts of coniferous trees maybe toxic if eaten in very large amounts. Small amounts may cause irritation and stomach upset, or can cause aspiration or obstruction. A skin rash may result from handling. Pine cones are not toxic but are not edible.

Boxwood

Commonly used in holiday wreathes and roping, the twigs and leaves contain a toxic alkaloid buxene. Ingestion could result in severe stomach problems, convulsions, and respiratory failure.

Suggested nontoxic plants:

African Violets; Christmas Cactus; Wandering Jew; Jade or Boston Fern, to name just a few.

Dialing 1.800.222.1222 will connect you to the Poison Control Center in your area. To contact the Upstate New York Poison Control Center business office, dial 1.315.464.7078.

Visit our website at www.upstatepoison.org

