

“DO NOT EAT” Flowers

It's not easy to make an absolute list of edible vs. inedible flowers. As the Latin adage states, “The dose makes the poison.” Many flowers are not lethal or toxic in a small amount, but concentrated, they are. The flowers listed below are best avoided because of their level of toxicity.

Dangerous / Poisonous flowers you should never eat

- **Amaryllis** (*Hippeastrum puniceum*) – leaves, stem and bulb are dangerous
- **Anemone** (*Anemone tuberosa* and other spp.) – all parts of the plant are dangerous
- **Angel's Trumpet / Brugmansia** (*Brugmansia x candida*) – all parts
- **Autumn crocus** (*Colchicum autumnale*) – all parts of the plant are dangerous
- **Azalea / Rhododendron** (*Rhododendron*)– Its toxins can impact heart rhythm and blood pressure.
- **Belladonna Lily (Naked Lady)** (*Amaryllis belladonna*) – the bulb is dangerous
- **Birds-of-Paradise** (*Strelitzia reginae*) – seeds and pods are dangerous
- **Bluebell** (*Hyacinthoides*) – All parts of the bluebell contains toxic glycosides.
- **Bougainvillea** (*Bougainvillea*) – Any parts of the plant with sap
- **Buckeye (Horse Chestnut)** (*Aesculus arguta* and *A. hippocastanum* and other spp.) – seeds, flowers and leaves are dangerous
- **Buttercup** (*Ranunculus* spp.) – all parts are dangerous
- **Caladium** (*Caladium bicolor* and other spp.) – all parts are dangerous
- **Cardinal flower** (*Lobelia cardinalis*) – the bulb is particularly dangerous
- **Clematis** (*Clematis*) – Mild, but toxic, contact with clematis (mouth or skin) can cause irritation.
- **Crocus** (*Crocus vernus*) and (*Colchicum autumnale*) – all parts are dangerous
- **Daffodil** (*Narcissus*) – Eating any part of a daffodil will cause distress due to the toxin, lycorine.
- **Datura** (*Datura meteloides*) / **Jimsonweed** (*Datura stramonium*) – all parts
- **False Jasmine** (*Gelsemium sempervirens*) - is considered too poisonous for human consumption.
- **Four O'Clocks** (*Mirabilis jalapa*) – all parts can have toxic elements
- **Foxglove** (*Digitalis*)– These contain naturally-occurring poisons that affect the heart.
- **Gloriosa Lily** (*Gloriosa* spp.) – all parts
- **Hyacinth** (*Hyacinthus orientalis*) – all parts are dangerous, but especially the bulb
- **Hydrangea** (*Hydrangea*) – The small amount of cyanide in Hydrangeas make them dangerous.
- **Iris** (*Iris* spp.) – Leaves and rootstock
- **Lantana** (*Lantana* spp.) – all parts
- **Larkspur** (*Delphinium*) – Its toxic alkaloids are fast-acting and potentially life-threatening.
- **Lily-of-the-Valley** (*Convallaria majalis*) – Pretty, but they contain convallatoxin, which should not be ingested.
- **Lupine / Bluebonnet** (*Lupinus* spp.) – all parts
- **Milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) – all parts of the plant
- **Mimosa seeds** (*Albizia julibrissin*) – the petals are edible, but the seeds are poison
- **Monkshood** (*Aconitum* spp.) – all parts
- **Narcissus** (*Narcissus* spp.) – all parts
- **Oleander** (*Nerium oleander*) – The whole plant is highly-toxic – one of the most toxic garden plants in fact.
- **Plumbago / Cape leadwort / Cape plumbago** (*Plumbago auriculata*) – all parts
- **Poinsettia** (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) – all parts
- **Poppy** (*Papaver*) – Give these a wide berth as all poppy flowers are poisonous.
- **Star-of-Bethlehem** (*Ornithogalum* spp.) – all parts
- **Sweet pea** (*Lathyrus* spp.) - all parts
- **Tansy** (*Tanacetum vulgare*) – all parts
- **Trumpet Vine** (*Campsis radicans*) – leaves and flowers may cause nausea and vomiting
- **Tulips** (*Tulipa*) - If touching tulips causes a rash, numbness etc. - Don't eat them! Don't EVER eat the bulbs. If you have any doubts, don't eat the flower.
- **Wisteria** (*Wisteria floribunda* and *W. sinesis*) – pods and seeds are dangerous

Resources:

Tornio, Stacy. *Plants That Can Kill: 101 Toxic Species to Make You Think Twice*. New York: Skyhorse Publishing., 2017.

“Edible Flowers Guide.” Thompson & Morgan, <https://www.thompson-morgan.com/edible-flowers>. Accessed 14 February 2024.