

# [Foods & Plants That Can be Toxic For Birds](#)

## Foods & Plants That Can be Toxic For Birds

[Bird Health Care](#) ... [Safe Foods](#)

### [First Aid Instructions](#)

In a life-and-death situation when every minute counts for an animal, you can call the **ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center** for 24-hour emergency information at 888-4ANI-HELP (888-426-4435).

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Toxic: [Toxic Household Products](#) ... [Toxic Carpeting](#) ... [Teflon Poisoning](#) ... [Dangerous Air Filtration Systems](#)

Safe / Healthy: [Safe Alternatives for Toxic Household Cleaners](#) ... [Natural Pest Control](#) ... [Air Filtration Systems](#)

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**The below is not a complete list. It is recommended that you consult with a vet, if in doubt.**

Please note that the items marked with an\* are especially toxic to birds and can be fatal. Toxic foods are foods that can cause allergies and/or health problems in birds. Anything high in sugar or salt is inappropriate, as are fatty foods. More serious are things such as chocolate, which is toxic to many pets. Caffeinated or alcoholic beverages are also dangerous. I provided additional information as was available.

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Acorns  | Hellebore      |
|   | Hemlock        |
|   | Henbane        |
|   | Honeysuckle    |
|   | Horsebeans     |
| <b>Agave</b> , Maguey, Bayonet, Agavaceae <b>Toxic Principle:</b> Sap from the leaves, Seeds, Calcium oxalate raphides, Acrid volatile oils, Mechanically injurious <b>Clinical Signs:</b> Oral mucosa irritation, Contact urticaria, Skin: Immediate burning, erythema, urticaria, and | Horsebrush     |
|   | Horse Chestnut |
|   | Hyacinth bulbs |
|   | *Hydrangea     |
|   | Iris corms     |

edema, Granuloma reaction from punctures by leaves

Alcohol

Almond Plants / Seeds / plant-pan allergen profilin can cause serious reaction in some birds: Generally all plants of the Prunus genus EXCEPT the pulp of the fruit contain amygdalin or related glycosides which are slowly hydrolyzed to hydrocyanic acid. Some allergic reactions to [almond nuts](#) have been observed.

Alocasia

**Amaryllis: Clinical Signs:** Can cause vomiting, diarrhea, depression, appetite loss, tremors, drooling and abdominal pain

Angel's Trumpet (some species), seeds, leaves

Apple Seeds (small quantities ok)

\*Apricot (seeds, wood)

Arrowgrass

\*Autumn Crocus

**Asparagus Fern** - Sprenger's Fern, Lace Fern  
- **Toxic Principle:** Non-toxic, Berries, Sapogenins, Foliage **Clinical Signs:** Dermatitis, Irritant, Cardiac, sedative, and diuretic effects

Autumn Crocus/Meadow - Saffron

\*Avocado (any part of the plant -- including flesh, leaves, seeds, stem, skin)

**Azaleas:** Can cause weakness, upset stomach, drooling, heart failure, depression and possible coma

Baneberry

Bayonet

Beans: Broad, Castor, Glory, Fava, Horse,

Iris Ivy

\*Jack-in-the-pulpit

Japanese Yew

Java Beans

Jessamine

Jerusalem Cherry

\*Jimson weed

Jonquil

Jungle Trumpets

**Kalanchoe** aka Florist's Kalanchoe, Kalanchoe, Palm Beach Belle **Toxic Principle:**

Isoprene alkaloids, Cardiac glycosides, Cardiac bufadienolides, Bryotoxins, Non-toxic maybe - **Clinical Signs:** Labored respiration, Cardio-toxic effects, Excessive salivation, Digestive disturbance, Loss of interest in food and water

\*Lantana

Larkspur

Laurel

Lily

Lily-of-the-Valley

Lily Spider

Lobelia (some species), all parts

Locoweed

Lupine species

Malanga

Marigold

\*Milkweed

\*Mistletoe Berries: A Christmas plant, ingestion can cause significant vomiting and diarrhea, difficulty breathing, collapse, erratic behavior, hallucinations and death.

Mescal, Navy, Pregator, Scarlet Runner) -  
Large Beans: such as Anasazi, Black, Fava,  
Kidney, Lima, Navy, Pinto, and Soy - should  
never be fed raw. However, thoroughly  
cooked are safe and healthy.

Beargrass

\*Begonia

Bird of Paradise

Bitter Almonds\*

Bittersweet

Black-eyed Susan

Black Locust (Robinia pseudoacacia)

\*Bleeding Heart

Bluebonnet

Bloodrot

Box

Boxwood

Bracken fern

Buckeye

Buckthorn

Burning Bush

Buttercup (Ranunculus)

Caffeine

\*Caladium

\*Calla Lily

Canada Yew

Candelabra

Cactus

\*Castor Beans: Common Name: Castor Bean,  
Castor, Castor Oil Plant, palma Christi,  
Wonder Tree, Higuierilla, Steadfast **Toxic  
Principle:** Leaves, Seeds, Ricin, Ricinin  
**Clinical Signs:** Decrease blood pressure,  
Hypothermia, Decrease in [blood glucose](#),  
Increase in serum hepatic enzymes: AST,  
ALT, LDH, Increase in BUN, calcium,  
phosphorous, Upset Stomach, Vomitting,  
Abdominal Pain, Nausea, Diarrhea, Anorexia,  
Trembling, Weakness, Sudden Collapse,  
[Seizures](#), Exercise intolerance, Ataxia, Slight

Mock Orange

Monkshood

\*Morning Glory

Mountain Laurel

Mushrooms

Narcissus, daffodil

Nettles

Nectarine (seeds, wood)

Nightshade

\*Oak

**Oleander** aka Rosa Laurel

**Toxic Principle:** Seeds, Vase  
water, Whole plant, Smoke  
from burning, Cardioactive  
glycosides **Clinical Signs:**  
may cause diarrhea, nausea,  
vomiting, slowing of heart-  
rate, abnormal heart beat  
patterns, heart failure and  
possible death.

\*Onions (toxic to birds, small  
amount ok)

[Peace Lilly](#)

\*Peach (seeds, wood)

\*Pencil cactus plant

Peony

Periwinkle

Peyote Cactus

Philodendron aka Sweetheart  
Plant, Heart-leaf

Philodendron, Parlor Ivy

**Toxic Principle:**

**Nephrotoxic**, Entire Plant,  
Leaves, Oxalates, Calcium  
oxalate **Clinical Signs:**

Dermatitis, Excessive  
salivation, Red and swollen  
oral cavity, Pain, swelling,  
irritation to throat, Irritation  
and burning of mouth, lips,  
and tongue

Depression, Copious thick, ropy salivation,  
Thirsty

**Catnip** Common Name: Catmint, Catnip

**Toxic Principle:** Volatile oil **Clinical Signs:**  
Odd behavior, Drowsiness, Disorientation

Cedar

Ceriman

Cherry (seeds, wood)

Chinaberry

\*Chinese Sacred or Heavenly Bamboo

Chocolate

\*Choke Cherry (unripe berries)

Christmas Rose

Chrysanthemum: Results in vomiting,  
diarrhea, depression, drooling and appetite  
loss. Causes allergies in humans as it is a  
ragweed relative.

Clematis

Coriander

Coriaria

Cornflower

Corydalis

Crocus bulb

Croton (Codiaeum sp.)

**Crown of Thorns** aka Christ Plant, Christ  
Thorn, Crown of Thorns **Toxic Principle:**  
Miliamines, Terpenes, Diterpenes, Alkaloidal  
esters of diterpenoid ingenol, Stems: the  
juice, leaves, and thorns **Clinical Signs:** Eye  
irritation, Vomiting, Skin irritation, Diarrhea,  
Irritation to gastrointestinal tract

Curry Powder

Cyclamen bulb

Daffodil / Bulbs: **Clinical Signs:** Can cause  
severe gastrointestinal illness, convulsions,  
[seizures](#), low blood pressure and tremors.

Daphne

Datura

Pimpernel

Plum (seeds, wood)

Poinciana

**Poinsettia: Clinical Signs:**

Can cause irritation to the  
mouth and stomach and  
sometimes vomiting

Poison Ivy

Poison Oak

Pokeweed

Poppy

Potato (green seed balls,  
green tubers; plant, leaves  
and stem)

Precatory beans

Privet

Rhododendron

\*Rhubarb: Rhubarb leaves  
are poisonous but the edible  
rhubarb stalks are safe.

\*Rosary Pea

[Rubber Plant](#)

**Schefflera aka Umbrella**

**Tree**, Starleaf, Australian

Umbrella Tree **Toxic**

**Principle:** Entire Plant,  
Saponins, Falcarinol,

Calcium oxalate, Oxalic acid

**Clinical Signs:** Dermatitis,  
Vomiting, Leukopenia, Loss  
of coordination, Irritation of  
mouth, lips, and tongue

Scotch Broom

\*Shamrock (Oxalis sp.)

Skunk Cabbage

Snowdrops

Snow-on-the-Mountain

Spindle Tree, Euonymus

(some species), leaves, fruit,  
bark

Spreading English Yew

Deadly Nightshade  
Death Camas

\*Delphinium, larkspur, monkshood

Dicentra  
Dieffenbachia

**Dumb Cane** aka Dumb Plant, Dumb Cane, Mother-in-law's Tongue Plant **Toxic**

**Principle:** Histamine poisoning, All parts: leaves, stems, sap, Proteolytic enzymes, Calcium oxalate crystals, Other toxins

**Clinical Signs:** Swelling of throat, Impairment of speech, Excessive salivation, Pain and swelling of mouth, Skin rashes

Easter Lily

Eggplant: The leaves of the plant on which the eggplant fruit grows are poisonous, but the fruit itself is said to be safe. Some sources caution of overly ripe or under-ripe eggplant fruit.

Elderberry (unripe berries)  
Elephant Ear

[English Ivy](#)

Fava Beans  
Fig (Ficus)  
Euonymus  
Evergreen Ferns  
Ficus

**Fiddle-leaf Philodendron** aka Tree Philodendron, Cut-leaf Philodendron **Toxic**  
**Principle:** Nephrotoxic, Entire Plant, Leaves, Oxalates, Calcium oxalate **Clinical Signs:** Dermatitis, Excessive salivation, Red and swollen oral cavity, Pain, swelling, irritation to throat, Irritation and burning of mouth, lips, and tongue

**Holly:** Commonly found during the Christmas season, can cause intense vomiting, diarrhea and depression.

**Flax ??** (Controversial - This may be the case in large quantities - consult with your vet)

Spurge (Euphorbia sp.)  
Staggerweed  
Starleaf  
Star of Bethlehem

Sweet Pea - *Lathyrus latifolius* - L.: Although no records of toxicity have been found for this plant, the seed of some species in this genus contain a toxic amino acid that can cause a severe disease of the nervous system known as 'lathyrism' if they are eaten in large amounts (although small quantities are said to be nutritious). Great caution is advised. Ref. [www.pfaf.org](http://www.pfaf.org)

Tansy Mustard  
Tobacco  
Tomatoes (leaves and stem)  
Tuffroot

Tulip: **Clinical Symptoms:** Can cause intense vomiting, depression, diarrhea, drooling and appetite loss.

Virginia Creeper  
Walnut hulls  
Water Arum

[Weeping Fig](#)

Wild Call Wisteria  
Wild Calla  
Wisteria  
Yellow Calla

\*Yew

Yucca aka Spineless Yucca, Soapweed, Spanish Bayonet  
**Toxic Principle:** Spines, Furostanols, Leaves, Saponins [steroidal], Spirostanols – sarsasapogenin **Clinical**

**Signs:** Vomiting, Bloat,  
Diarrhea, Nausea,  
Mechanical damage

[Zamioculcas](#) - an indoor  
plant. All parts of the plant are  
poisonous if ingested.

**Related Resources:** [Indiana Toxic Plants](#) ... Veterinary Medicine Library

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## Unsafe Plants / Fruits and Trees

Below is a list of indoor and outdoor plants and trees which are hazardous to birds. It has been gathered from various sources and is not complete.

Below is a listing of unsafe plants, fruits and trees.

Agave, Maguey, Bayonet, Agavaceae

**Toxic Principle:** Sap from the leaves,  
Seeds, Calcium oxalate raphides, Acrid  
volatile oils, Mechanically injurious

**Clinical Signs:** Oral mucosa irritation,  
Contact urticaria, Skin: Immediate  
burning, erythema, urticaria, and  
edema, Granuloma reaction from  
punctures by leaves

Alacia

**Amaryllis: Clinical Signs:** Can cause  
vomiting, diarrhea, depression, appetite  
loss, tremors, drooling and abdominal  
pain

American Yew

Apricot

**Asparagus Fern** - Sprenger Fern,  
Lace Fern - **Toxic Principle:** Non-toxic,

Japanese Yew - needles, seeds

Jasmine

Java Bean - lima bean - uncooked

Jimsonweed/Thornapple

Jerusalem Cherry - berries

Johnson Grass

Juniper - needles, stems, berries

**Kalanchoe** aka Florist's

Kalanchoe, Kalanchoe, Palm

Beach Belle **Toxic Principle:**

Isoprene alkaloids, Cardiac  
glycosides, Cardiac bufadienolides,  
Bryotoxins, Non-toxic maybe

**Clinical Signs:** Labored  
respiration, Cardio-toxic effects,  
Excessive salivation, Digestive  
disturbance, Loss of interest in food  
and water

Kentucky Coffee Tree

Lantana - immature berries

Larkspur

Laurel

Lily of the Valley - also water the  
plant is in

Lobelia

Locoweed

Berries, Sapogenins, Foliage **Clinical**

**Signs:** Dermatitis, Irritant, Cardiac, sedative, and diuretic effects

Autumn Crocus/Meadow - Saffron  
Avocado

**Azaleas:** Can cause weakness, upset stomach, drooling, heart failure, depression and possible coma

Balsam Pear - seeds, outer rind of fruit

Baneberry - berries, root

Beans - all types if uncooked

Birch

Bird of Paradise - seeds

Bittersweet Nightshade

Black Locust - bark, sprouts, foliage

Bloodroot

Blue-green Algae - some forms toxic

Boxwood - leaves, stems

Bracken Fern

Broomcorn Grass

Buckthorn - fruit, bark

Buttercup - sap, bulbs

Caladium - leaves

Calla Lily - leaves

Candelabra Tree

Cardinal Flower-

\*Castor Beans: Common Name: Castor Bean, Castor, Castor Oil Plant, palma Christi, Wonder Tree, Higuera, Higuera,

Steadfast **Toxic Principle:** Leaves,

Seeds, Ricin, Ricinin **Clinical Signs:**

Decrease blood pressure, Hypothermia,

Decrease in [blood glucose](#), Increase in

serum hepatic enzymes: AST, ALT,

LDH, Increase in BUN, calcium,

phosphorous, Upset Stomach,

Vomiting, Abdominal Pain, Nausea,

Diarrhea, Anorexia, Trembling,

Weakness, Sudden Collapse, [Seizures](#),

Exercise intolerance, Ataxia, Slight

Depression, Copious thick, ropy

salivation, Thirsty

**Catnip** Common Name: Catmint, Catnip

**Toxic Principle:** Volatile oil **Clinical**

Lords and

Ladies/Cuckoo-pint

Lupines/Bluebonnet

**mahogany** - varying degrees of toxicity between the different varieties. Splinters easily. Not suitable for perches.

Mandrake

Mango Tree - wood, leaves, rind - fruit safe

Mayapple - fruit is safe

Mescal Beans - seeds

\*Mistletoe Berries: A Christmas plant, ingestion can cause significant vomiting and diarrhea, difficulty breathing, collapse, erratic behavior, hallucinations and death.

Mock Orange - fruit

Monkshood/Aconite - leaves, root

Moonseed

Morning Glory

Mountain Laurel

Mushrooms - several varieties

Narcissus - bulbs

Nectarine

Nettles

Nightshade - all varieties

Nutmeg, nectar

Oak - acorns, foliage

**Oleander** aka Rosa Laurel **Toxic**

**Principle:** Seeds, Vase water,

Whole plant, Smoke from burning,

Cardioactive glycosides **Clinical**

**Signs:** may cause diarrhea,

nausea, vomiting, slowing of heart-

rate, abnormal heart beat patterns,

heart failure and possible death.

Parsnip root contains three photoactive, mutagenic, and photocarcinogenic psoralens in a total concentration of about 40 parts per million. These chemicals are not destroyed by normal cooking procedures. Data about the

**Signs:** Odd behavior, Drowsiness, Disorientation

Cedar

Chalice Vine/Trumpet vine

Cherry Tree - bark, twigs, leaves, pits

Chinaberry Tree

Christmas Candle - sap

Clematis/Virginia Bower

Coral Plant - seeds

Coriander

Cowslip/Marsh Marigold

**Crown of Thorns** aka Christ Plant, Christ Thorn, Crown of Thorns **Toxic**

**Principle:** Miliamines, Terpenes, Diterpenes, Alkaloidal esters of diterpenoid ingenol, Stems: the juice, leaves, and thorns **Clinical Signs:** Eye irritation, Vomiting, Skin irritation, Diarrhea, Irritation to gastrointestinal tract

Croton

Curry Powder

Daffodil / Bulbs: **Clinical Signs:** Can cause severe gastrointestinal illness, convulsions, [seizures](#), low blood pressure and tremors.

Daphne - berries

Datura - berries

Deadly Amanita

Death Camas

Delphinium

**Dumb Cane** aka Dumb Plant, Dumb Cane, Mother-in-law's Tongue **Toxic Principle:** Histamine poisoning, All parts: leaves, stems, sap, Proteolytic enzymes, Calcium oxalate crystals, Other toxins **Clinical Signs:** Swelling of throat, Impairment of speech, Excessive salivation, Pain and swelling of mouth, Skin rashes

Eggplant - fruit okay / leaves toxic

toxicologic consequences of such exposure are not available.

Peach

**Peanuts** - raw: (Peanuts are often contaminated with aflatoxin, a fungal toxin. Aflatoxin is carcinogenic and causes liver damage in birds, other animals, and even humans. Roasting reduces aflatoxin but does not eliminate it entirely. North American peanut producers are currently working on eliminating contaminated peanuts from their products. Especially peanuts with dark spots on them should be considered suspect, but even those that look clean and perfect could possibly be contaminated.)

Pencil Tree

Periwinkle-

**Persimmon:** Has high levels of tannins and should best be avoided. Even though birds regularly feed on vegetation high in tannins, it is unclear how safe it is for them. Also: unripe persimmons can cause digestive issues.

Philodendron aka Sweetheart Plant, Heart-leaf Philodendron, Parlor Ivy **Toxic Principle:** **Nephrotoxic**, Entire Plant, Leaves, Oxalates, Calcium oxalate **Clinical Signs:** Dermatitis, Excessive salivation, Red and swollen oral cavity, Pain, swelling, irritation to throat, Irritation and burning of mouth, lips, and tongue

Pigweed

Pikeweed

Pine needles - berries

Plum

Pointsetta - leaves, roots, immature



Elderberry  
Elephants Ear/Taro - leaves, stem  
English Ivy berries, leaves  
English Yew  
Euonymus/Spindle Tree  
False Hellebore  
False Henbane  
Ficus (weeping)

**Fiddle-leaf Philodendron** aka Tree  
Philodendron, Cut-leaf Philodenron  
**Toxic Principle:** Nephrotoxic, Entire  
Plant, Leaves, Oxalates, Calcium  
oxalate **Clinical Signs:** Dermatitis,  
Excessive salivation, Red and swollen  
oral cavity, Pain, swelling, irritation to  
throat, Irritation and burning of mouth,  
lips, and tongue

Firethorn/Pyracantha  
Fly Agaric Mushroom  
Deadly Amanita  
Four O'Clock  
Foxglove - leaves, seeds  
Golden Chain/Laburnum  
Glory Bean  
Ground Cherry  
Hemlock - including the water the plant  
is in  
Henbane - seeds

**Holly:** Commonly found during the  
Christmas season, can cause intense  
vomiting, diarrhea and depression.

Honey Locust  
Honeysuckle  
Horse Chestnut/Buckeye - nuts, twigs  
Horsetail  
Hyacinth - bulbs  
Hydrangea - flower bud  
Indian Licorice Bean  
Indian Turnip/Jack-in-Pulpit  
Iris/Blue Flag - bulbs  
Ivy  
Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Jade Plant, Jade Tree, Dollar Plant,  
leaves are toxic. Clinical Signs:

Poison Ivy - sap  
Poison Oak - sap  
Pomegranates (root / bark of the  
Pomegranate)  
Pokeweed/Inkberry - leaf, root,  
young berries  
Potato - eyes, new shoots

[Pothos](#) (Golden Ivy)

Privet  
Prune  
Rain Tree  
Ranunculus/Buttercup  
Red Cedar  
Red Maple  
Red Oak  
Rhododendron  
Rhubarb - leaves (edible stalks  
fine)  
Rosary Peas/Indian  
Licorice - seeds  
Sandbox Tree  
Scarlet Runner Beans

**Schefflera aka Umbrella Tree,**  
Starleaf, Australian Umbrella Tree  
**Toxic Principle:** Entire Plant,  
Saponins, Falcarinol, Calcium  
oxalate, Oxalic acid **Clinical Signs:**  
Dermatitis, Vomiting, Leukopenia,  
Loss of coordination, Irritation of  
mouth, lips, and tongue

Skunk Cabbage  
Snowdrop  
Snowflake  
Snow on the Mountain / Ghostweed  
Sorghum Grass  
Sorrel  
Sudan Grass  
Sweet Pea - seeds, fruit  
Tansy Ragwort  
Tobacco - leaves  
Vetch  
Virginia Creeper - sap  
Water Hemlock  
Western Yew  
Wisteria

Digestive upset, Nausea

Four-o'clocks (Mirabilis)

Foxglove (Digitalis)

\***Garlic** (safe for birds in **SMALL** amounts)

Golden Glow

Gopher Purge

Yam bean - roots, immature roots

Yello Jasmine

Yew (Amer,Engl,Japan) - needles, thistles

Yucca aka Spineless Yucca, Soapweed, Spanish Bayonet;

**Toxic Principle:** Spines, Furostanols, Leaves, Saponins [steroidal], Spirostanols – sarsasapogenin; **Clinical Signs:** Vomiting, Bloat, Diarrhea, Nausea, Mechanical damage

[Zamioculcas](#) - an indoor plant. All parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested.

**Related Resources:** Indiana Plants: Veterinary Medicine Library

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## Unsafe Wood / Not Recommended for Perches

Below is a list of indoor and outdoor plants and trees which are considered hazardous to birds. It has been gathered from various sources and is not complete. Opinions differ, which made research rather confusing. If in doubt, discuss with your vet.

Apple (controversial - some say it's safe. Refer to above. Discuss with your vet)

Nectarine

Apricot

Peach

Arbutus

Plum

Ash (Mountain Ash is listed as safe on many lists)

Prune (Controversial again - sometimes listed as toxic, other times as safe - discuss with vet)

Cherry (controversial - some say it's safe. Refer to above. Discuss with your vet)

Red Cedar

## [Safe Woods](#)

Species Research by [Sibylle Johnson](#)

For updates please [follow BeautyOfBirds on Google+](#) ([google.com/+Avianweb](https://google.com/+Avianweb))

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