

STAFF RESOURCES

Information About Poisonous Plants

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Plants are the third most common cause of poisoning among children in the United States. It is important for any staff member who wants to have a plant at school to know the name of the plant and to make sure the plant is nontoxic before bringing it to school.

To prevent accidental poisoning, staff members must check whether the plant is toxic when swallowed or touched before bringing it inside the school or planting it on school grounds. This information can be found on reputable websites, such as those in the box below.

Online Resources on Poisonous Plants

- University Of Nebraska-Lincoln
www.lancaster.unl.edu/factsheets/031.htm
- Oregon Poison Center at Oregon Health and Science University
www.ohsu.edu/poison/youAndYourfamily/plantSafety.htm
- Washington Poison Center
www.wapc.org/poisons/plantlist.htm
- Texas Poison Center Network
www.poisoncontrol.org/plants.html
- AgriLife Extension Service at the Texas A&M System
aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/lawn_garden/poison/poison.html

Once the toxicity status of a plant is found, a copy of the status will be given to the building administrator for review. Once the building administrator examines this information, he or she will approve or disapprove the plant being used at school.

Care must be taken – a plant might be listed as safe in one resource and unsafe in another. In this case, please err on the side of caution and exclude this plant from school.

Shrubs, trees and other plants that are part of the landscape on school grounds are not expected to be removed if found to be poisonous. Information about any dangerous plants will be shared with the staff. Staff members should avoid taking students near areas of concern. If such areas are unavoidable, staff should observe students closely to prevent contact with poisonous plants. All planting done on school grounds should be monitored for safety in advance.

As beautiful as plants are, our students must be protected from the dangers of being exposed to poisonous plants.