



## **Guidance: Poisonous Plants in Family Child Care**

Minnesota Rules, part 9502.0435, Toxic Substances, states: “All medicines, chemicals, detergents, **poisonous plants**, alcoholic beverages, and other toxic substances must be inaccessible to children.” This requirement is critical, as the Minnesota Poison Control System states that over half of the calls received by poison control centers nationwide are related to incidents involving children under the age of six. Ensuring that family child care providers know what potentially poisonous plants they have in their yards, and how best to protect the children in their care from the negative effects of those plants, is essential for keeping Minnesota’s children safe.

### **What is a poisonous plant?**

The toxicity levels of plants vary. A child’s reaction to different plants can vary greatly as well, with symptoms ranging from skin irritation to vomiting and diarrhea. In more serious cases, exposure can affect a child’s heart, kidneys or liver. To explain the toxicity levels of plants, the Minnesota Poison Control System has a list published online that divides plants into three categories: Non-toxic, Mildly Toxic, and Toxic. The online document can be found [HERE](#) (also attached). The list describes the toxicity of the three categories of plants and provides some direction about safely keeping the plants around children.

- Nontoxic (safe, not poisonous). The plants in this category are considered to be non-toxic. However, any plant may cause unexpected reactions in certain individuals, including choking. Common plants in this category include ferns and lilacs.
- Mildly Toxic (caution). The plants in this category may be mildly toxic or may easily be confused with toxic plants. Plants in this category are common in many households and yards and include tomato (leaves), crab apple, dogwood, and potato (leaves) plants.
- Toxic (dangerous, poisonous). The plants in this category are toxic. Many of the plants in this category are common in landscaping and along walkways such as hydrangea and peonies.

## **What can I do to comply with this requirement?**

### **What do I do if I have non-toxic plants in my home or yard?**

- Location of plants: Although there are no restrictions about the location or accessibility of these plants to children, children could ingest these plants. Make sure you know what to do if a child ingests the plants or has an unexpected allergic reaction.
- If a child ingests a portion of a non-toxic plant, the Minnesota Poison Control System recommends that Poison Control be contacted at 1-800-222-1222.

### **What do I do if I have mildly toxic plants in my home or yard?**

- Location of plants: Because these plants are mildly poisonous, they can be kept around children, “with some precautions.” These plants should not be directly in the area where the children’s activities most often occur. However, these plants may be located in other areas of a yard not used

for regular play and where a child's presence would be known when the required supervision is being provided. They may also be located in areas where children may pass while supervised when in route to the yard's play area or when entering the home. If the provider would have difficulty intervening to prevent the ingestion of toxic plants, the provider needs to provide some type of barrier to make these plants inaccessible to children. The provider may also choose to remove the plants rather than installing a barrier.

- If a child ingests a portion of a mildly toxic plant, Poison Control should be called at 1-800-222-1222.

### **What do I do if I have toxic plants in my home or yard?**

- Location of plants: Like mildly toxic plants, plants in this category should not be directly in the area where the children's activities most often occur. These plants may be located in other areas of a yard not used for regular play and where a child's presence would be known when the required supervision is being provided. They may also be located in areas where children may pass while supervised when in route to the yard's play area or when entering the home. If the provider would have difficulty intervening to prevent the ingestion of toxic plants, the provider needs to provide some type of barrier to make these plants inaccessible to children. The provider may also choose to remove the plants rather than installing a barrier.
- If a child ingests any portion of a toxic plant, Poison Control needs to be contacted immediately at 1-800-222-1222.

### **What steps can I take to comply with this requirement and ensure that poisonous plants are inaccessible to children?**

- (1) Know your yard. Do you know which plants are in your yard? Are any mildly toxic or toxic?
- (2) Assess the location of the plants, especially those included on the Minnesota Poison Control System list as mildly toxic or toxic. Which plants are in locations that children use to play?
- (3) Assess your ability to supervise children in those spaces. For mildly toxic and toxic plants, providing required supervision is critical in making the plants in the yard inaccessible to children in care. If mildly toxic or toxic plants are in a provider's yard, the provider must assess how close the plants are to the area used by children and the provider's ability to provide the required supervision to prevent children from accessing the mildly toxic and toxic plants. If the provider would have difficulty intervening to prevent the ingestion of mildly toxic or toxic plants, the provider needs to provide some type of barrier to make these plants inaccessible to children. The provider may also choose to remove the plants rather than installing a barrier.
- (4) Questions or concerns. If you have questions or concerns, reach out your county licenser or use DHS' "[Family Child Care Provider Questions](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/fccfaq)" portal to receive clarification on licensing requirements ([www.dhs.state.mn.us/fccfaq](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us/fccfaq)).

### **What if I have plants in my home or yard that are not on the Minnesota Poison Control System list?**

- The same steps listed above apply to this situation. (1) Do you know which plants are in your yard? (2) Assess whether these plants are in locations that children use to play. (3) If a child was near these plants, is he/she being supervised, such as by you or a parent (i.e., along a walkway to the home)? Would you be able to intervene and prevent a child from ingesting the plants? (4) If you are still uncertain of the appropriate steps to take, reach out for further guidance.

### **Nontoxic (Safe, not poisonous)**

The following plants are considered to be non-toxic. However, any plant may cause unexpected reactions in certain individuals, including choking. Always check with the Minnesota Poison Control System if a plant has been ingested.

Abelia	Calathea Argyraea	Easter Lily Cactus	Kalanchoe	Plush Plant	Staghorn Fern
African Daisy	Calico Hearts	Elm Tree	Lilac	Polka Dot Plant	Starfish Flower
African Violet	Calla Lily	Eugenia	Linden Tree	Potentilla	Streptocarpus
Aglaonema	Begonia	False Salomon's Seal	Lip Stick Plant	Powder Puff	String of Buttons
Airplane Plant	Camellia	Fatsia	Maidenhair Fern	Prayer Plant	Striped Inch Plant
Alpine Currant	Carrice Flower	Feltbrush	Magnolia	Pregnant Plant	Sumac (Staghorn or Smooth)
Aluminum Plant	Cattail	Ferns	Maple Trees	Propeller Plant	Sweet Plant
Alyssum	Cattleya	Ficus Benjamina	Marigolds(except	Purple Passions	Swedish Ivy
Antherioum	China Doll	Fig Tree	Marsh Marigolds)	Queen's Tears	Sword Fern
Anthurium	Chinese Evergreen	Fittonia	Maternity Plant	Rabbit's Foot	Teddy Bear Plant
Aralia	Christmas Cactus	Forsythia	Mock Orange	Rainbow Plant	Umbrella Tree
Aroca Palm	Coleus	Friendship Plant	Mountain Ash	Ribbon Plant	Velvet Plant
Ash Tree	Columbine	Fuchsia	Natal Plant	Rosary Vine	Venus Fly Trap
Aspidistra	Coral Bells	Gardenia	Neanthe Bella Palm	Rubber Plant	Viburnum
Aster	Cordylone	Gloxinia	Nerve Plant	Salvia	Vriesea
Astilbe	Corn Plant	Golddust Plan	Norfolk Island Pine	Sansevieria	Wandering Jew
Baby's Breath	Creeping Charlie	Goldfish Plant	Palms	Schefflera	Wax Plant
Baby's Tears	(houseplant)	Grape Ivy	Panda Plant	Screw Pine	Willow
Baby's Toes	Crocus (Spring)	Hawaiian Ti Plant	Passion Vine	Sensitive Plant	Yucca
Bachelor's	Croton (houseplant)	Hibiscus	Peacock Plant	Silk Tree	Zebra Plant
Buttcas	Dahlin	Honey Locust	Pellionia	Silver Dollar Plant	Zinnia
Balsam	Dandelion	Hosta	Peperomia	Silver Evergreen	
Basket Vine	Dracaena	Hoya	Petunia	Silver Poplar	
Bleeding Heart Vine	Dragon Tree	Impatiens	Phlox	Sinningia	
Blood Leaf Plant	Easter Cactus	Jacobs Ladder	Piggyback Plant	Snake Plant	
Boston Fern	Easter Lily	Jade Plant	Pilea	Spider Plant	
Bromelia		Japanese Aralia	Pine Trees	Spirea	
Bromeliad				Spruce	

### **Caution (Mildly toxic)**

The following plants may be mildly toxic or may easily be confused with toxic plants. However, since they are only mildly poisonous, then can be kept around children, with some precautions. We recommend calling the Minnesota Poison Control System if a child consumer a portion of any of the following:

Aloe Vera	Araucaria	Angel's Wings	Arrowhead	Asparagus Fern	Sedum
Begonia	American Ivy	Donkey Tail	Ivy	Painted Lady	Shamrock Plant
Birch Tree	Carrot (Greens)	Dutchman's Pipe	Jonquil	Pansy	Spathe Flower
Black Walnut	Century Plant	Elephant Ear	Juniper	Peace Lily	Spathiphyllum
Bleeding Heart	Chenille Plant	Engleman Ivy	Lamb's Tail	Philodendron	Sprenger Fern
Boston Ivy	Cherries	English Ivy	Mexican Snowball	Poinsettia	Sweet Pea
Bougainvillea	Chrysanthemum	Eucalyptus	Mother-in-law Plant	Potato (Leaves)	Tomato (Leaves)
Burro Tail	Clivia	Five-Leaved Ivy	Narcissus	Pothos	Tulip
Cactus	Cotoneaster	Geranium	Nepthytis	Rhubarb (Leaves)	Violets
Caladium	Crab Apple	Gladiola	Oak Trees	Rose	Virginia Creeper
Calla Lily	Daisy	Hens and Chicks	Oxalis	Sand Begonia	Woodbine
Carnation	Devils Ivy	Honeysuckle		Seindapsus	
	Dieffenbachia	Iris			
	Dogwood				

### **Toxic (Dangerous, poisonous)**

The following plants are considered toxic. If any portion of the following plans is ingested, call the Minnesota Poison Control System, Immediately

Alder Buckthorn	Chinese Lantern	Hawaiian Baby Wood	Lobelia	Peony	Solomon's Seal
Amaryllis	Christmas Rose	Rose	Loco Weed	Periwinkle	Star-of-Bethlehem
Anemone	Clemantis	Hedge Apples	Marijuana	Peyote	String-of-Beads
Angel's Trumpet	Crocus	Hemlock	Marsh Marigold	Poison Ivy	Toadstools
Arborvitae	Croton	Hogwort	May Apple	Poison Oak	Tobacco
Azalea	Crown of Thorns	Holly	Milkweed	Poison Sumac	Trumpet Plant
Banennery	Crown Vetch	Hyacinth	Mistletoe	Pokeweed	Vinca
Barberry	Cyclamen	Hydrangea	Moonseed	Poppies	Water Hemlock
Bird of Paradise	Daphne	Jack-in-the-Pulpit	Monkshood	Primrose	Wild Parsnip
Bittersweet	Delphinium	Japanese Yew	Morning Glory	Ranuncalus	Wisteria
Black Locust	Elderberry	Jequirity Bean	Mountain Laurel	Rhododendron	Yew
Buckeye	Euonymus	Jerusalem Cherry	Mushrooms	Rosary Beans	
Buckthorn	Fluffy Ruffles	Jimson Weed	Nightshade	Rosary Peas	
Buttercups	Four O'Clock	Lanatana	Oleander	Snow-on-the-Mountain	
Calico Bush	Fox Glove	Larkspur	Paradise Plant		
Calico Bean	Gingko	Lily of the Valley	Parsnip		