

Guidance: Poisonous Plants in Family Child Care

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 licensor or use DHS’ portal to receive clarification on licensing requirements at (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
Aluminum Plant	Cattail	Ferns	Maple Trees	Propeller Plant	Smooth)
Alyssum	Cattleya	Ficus Benjamina	Marigolds(except	Purple Passions	Sweet Plant
Antherioum	China Doll	Fig Tree	Marsh Marigolds)	Queen’s Tears	Swedish Ivy
Anthurium	Chinese Evergreen	Fittonia	Maternity Plant	Rabbit’s Foot	Sword Fern
Aralia	Christmas Cactus	Forsythia	Mock Orange	Rainbow Plant	Teddy Bear Plant
Aroca Palm	Coleus	Friendship Plant	Mountain Ash	Ribbon Plant	Umbrella Tree
Ash Tree	Columbine	Fuchsia	Natal Plant	Rosary Vine	Velvet Plant
Aspidistra	Coral Bells	Gardenia	Neanthe Bella Palm	Rubber Plant	Venus Fly Trap
Aster	Cordyline	Gloxinia	Nerve Plant	Salvia	Viburnum
Astilbe	Corn Plant	Golddust Plan	Norfolk Island Pine	Sansevieria	Vriesea
Baby’s Breath	Creeping Charlie	Goldfish Plant	Palms	Schefflera	Wandering Jew
Baby’s Tears	(houseplant)	Grape Ivy	Panda Plant	Screw Pine	Wax Plant
Baby’s Toes	Crocus (Spring)	Hawaiian Ti Plant	Passion Vine	Sensitive Plant	Willow
Bachelor’s	Croton (houseplant)	Hibiscus	Peacock Plant	Silk Tree	Yucca
Buttcas	Dahlin	Honey Locust	Pellionia	Silver Dollar Plant	Zebra Plant
Balsam	Dandelion	Hosta	Peperomia	Silver Evergreen	Zinnia
Basket Vine	Dracaena	Hoya	Petunia	Silver Poplar	
Bleeding Heart Vine	Dragon Tree	Impatients	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 Begonia Birch Tree Black Walnut Bleeding Heart Boston Ivy Bougainvillea Burro Tail Cactus Caladium Calla Lily Carnation	Araucaria American Ivy Carrot (Greens) Century Plant Chenille Plant Cherries Chrysanthemum Clivia Cotoneaster Crab Apple Daisy Devils Ivy Dieffenbachia Dogwood	Angel's Wings Donkey Tail Dutchman's Pipe Elephant Ear Engleman Ivy English Ivy Eucalyptus Five-Leaved Ivy Geranium Gladiola Hens and Chicks Honeysuckle Iris	Arrowhead Ivy Jonquil Juniper Lamb's Tail Mexican Snowball Mother-in-law Plant Narcissus Nephthytis Oak Trees Oxalis	Asparagus Fern Painted Lady Pansy Peace Lily Philodendron Poinsettia Potato (Leaves) Pothos Rhubarb (Leaves) Rose Sand Begonia Seindapsus	Sedum Shamrock Plant Spathe Flower Spathiphyllum Sprengeri Fern Sweet Pea Tomato (Leaves) Tulip Violets Virginia Creeper Woodbine
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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 Amaryllis Anemone Angel's Trumpet Arborvitae Azalea Banenerry Barberry Bird of Paradise Bittersweet Black Locust Buckeye Buckthorn Buttercups Calico Bush Calico Bean	Chinese Lantern Christmas Rose Clemantis Crocus Croton Crown of Thorns Crown Vetch Cyclamen Daphne Delphinium Elderberry Euonymus Fluffy Ruffles Four O'Clock Fox Glove Gingko	Hawaiian Baby Wood Rose Hedge Apples Hemlock Hogwort Holly Hyacinth Hydrangea Jack-in-the-Pulpit Japanese Yew Jequirity Bean Jerusalem Cherry Jimson Weed Lanatana Larkspur Lily of the Valley	Lobelia Loco Weed Marijuana Marsh Marigold May Apple Milkweed Mistletoe Moonseed Monkshood Morning Glory Mountain Laurel Mushrooms Nightshade Oleander Paradise Plant Parsnip	Peony Periwinkle Peyote Poison Ivy Poison Oak Poison Sumac Pokeweed Poppies Primrose Ranunculus Rhododendron Rosary Beans Rosary Peas Snow-on-the-Mountain	Solomon's Seal Star-of-Bethlehem String-of-Beads Toadstools Tobacco Trumpet Plant Vinca Water Hemlock Wild Parsnip Wisteria Yew
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