

# Common Plants Can Be Fatal Snack For Large Animals

KENNETT SQUARE (Chester Co.) — The leaves, flowers and berries of some common plants may be beautiful, but they can be deadly if eaten by livestock and pets, according to doctors at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine.

Rhododendron, azalea, nightshade, acorns, mountain laurel cherry trees, apple trees and yew are all toxic.

"Even maple leaves, which are not usually harmful, become acutely toxic in the fall," said Dr. Robert Poppenga, director of the toxicology laboratory at the New Bolton Center, Penn's large-animal facility in Kennett Square.

"Plant poisoning in pet animals is less common than in livestock," said Dr. Michaela Kristula of New Bolton Center's Field Service. "Small pets can be poisoned by household plants such as dieffenbachia, philodendron, and similar common house plants."

Leaves of the red maple, *Acer rubrum*, which become increas-

ingly toxic as they dry out, are particularly dangerous in the fall. If eaten by horses, the toxin contained in the leaves causes hemolytic anemia and secondary kidney damage, usually resulting in death or permanent kidney dysfunction. Other maple species are not considered toxic.

"There is no known antidote for maple-leaf poisoning," said Kristula. "Some horses die from the poison only 12 hours after it is ingested, so it is important to have the horse examined by a veterinarian immediately if you suspect he may have maple leaf poisoning." Clinical signs associated with hemolytic anemia resulting from toxins include lethargy, increased breathing rate, jaundice, and reddish-brown colored urine in the early stages.

To protect the animals, Kristula suggests horse owners take the following precautions:

- Do not plant red maple trees in or near your horse's pasture, as horses may nibble the leaves over

the fence if they are hungry.

- Make sure that your horse has plenty of hay and other feed to eat, so there is no temptation to eat the leaves if they blow into the pasture. This is especially important in the fall when pastures dry out and grass is sparse.

Other plants to watch out for are several species of nightshades and horenettle. The berries and vegetation are poisonous. Toxicity is not lost in drying, thus contaminated hay may be toxic. When ingested, they cause neurologic and digestive problems. These plants are found in disturbed soil, woods, meadows and pastures and cultivated fields. Nightshade poisoning affects all animals, but horses, sheep and goats are the most likely to nibble on it if feed is not available.

In sheep, severe intestinal lesions develop as a result of horenettle toxicosis. There may be inflammation of the mouth and esophagus in calves. Nervous symptoms may include apathy,

drowsiness, salivation, shortness of breath, trembling, progressive weakness or paralysis, prostration and even unconsciousness. The dried berries of horenettle, which cling to the plant over the winter, are so potent they can kill cattle in March.

Buttercups that proliferate in fields in May and June can cause critical gastrointestinal problems in livestock. In severe cases buttercups induce convulsions ending in death. Dried material in hay reportedly is not poisonous. Most livestock will not eat the plant when plenty of other forage is available.

Acorn poisoning can cause digestive problems, jaundice, permanent kidney damage and eventually, death. Calves, goats, and sheep are particularly susceptible to this poison; horses are rarely affected.

The leaves of rhododendron, mountain laurel and azalea, evergreen shrubs with glossy leaves and rose-colored or white flowers,

can also be toxic to sheep and goats. The toxin in the leaves causes severe indigestion, bloat and frothing at the mouth. The leaves and buds of hydrangea contain poisonous constituents that cause painful sickness in livestock and humans. Iris, if eaten in large quantities, causes gastroenteritis and labored breathing in livestock. The common morning glory's leaves and stems are toxic. Especially predisposed to poisoning from this creeping vine are hogs, sheep, cattle and goats. Prolonged consumption results in anorexia, coma, and, in severe cases, death.

Yew leaves are extremely toxic for all animals. Cattle seem particularly sensitive to the toxin. As little as one mouthful of the plant can be fatal, so it is essential for owners to dispose of clippings out of the animals' reach whenever pruning yew trees and shrubs.

A particularly harmful plant for horses is the black walnut. Ingestion is not necessary for poisoning to occur. Black walnut trees in the

(Turn to Page D3)

## Field Day Set For Tree Fruit Growers

BIGLERVILLE (Adams Co.)—Tree fruit growers in Pennsylvania and neighboring states are invited to a field day July 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. here at Penn State's Fruit Research and Extension Center.

Visitors will tour orchard research plots and hear presentations highlighting new research and extension programs.

The entomology program will include the latest information on various integrated pest management tactics, including degree days and weather forecasting, mating disruption, new biological control agents, ground cover management, and insect growth regulators. Participants will also learn how to combat insecticide resistance and what is being done to understand the development of resistance in insects.

The horticultural information that will be highlighted will include production data and economic evaluation of apple rootstocks, apple root system dynamics, performance of scab-resistant apple varieties, peach and apple thinning programs, and apple plant growth regulators to manage excessive tree vigor.

The postharvest portion of the program will include the introduction of the new postharvest physiologist and research program. Work conducted over the past three seasons concerning controlled atmosphere (CA) storage of apples from reduced pesticide trials will be briefly discussed.

Presentations will

include the control of major diseases of tree fruit crops caused by fungi, bacteria, viruses, and nematodes. Emphasis will be placed on methods helpful in reducing pesticide usage, including antagonistic bacteria and cover crops useful in controlling nematodes.

The 180-acre Fruit Research and Extension Center is located at 290 University Drive, just off Route 234 west of Biglerville in Adams County. Parking and admission are free.

For more information, call Peg Shaffer or Karen Weaver, (717) 677-6116.

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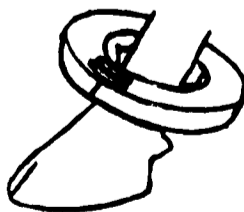
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82	3.0" x 985'	250'	SR150	90 TI	17,500	15,750
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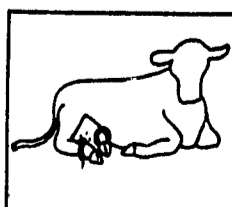
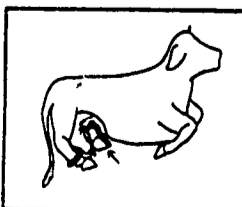
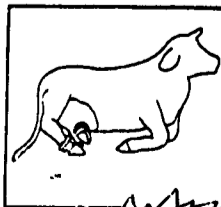


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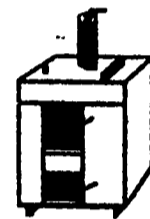
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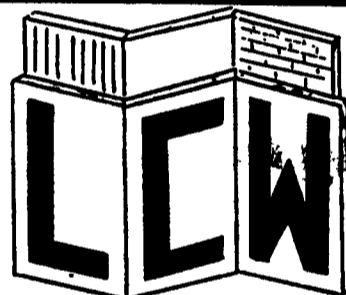
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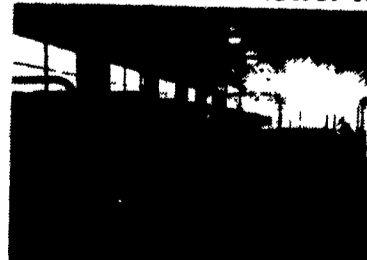


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