

# Western Washington Poisonous Plants

## Western Washington Plants Known to Be Poisonous to Horses (USDA-SCS)

### Buttercup, creeping (*Ranunculus repens*)

Location or Season	Moist soils
Probable Toxic Dose	Very Large
Toxin	Protoanemonin
Symptoms	Inflammation and narcosis
Comments	Rarely eaten unless pasture overgrazed

### Camas, death (*Zigadenus venenosus*)

Location or Season	Spring
Probable Toxic Dose	less than 9 lb.
Toxin	Steroidal, glycosidal, alkaloid
Symptoms	Salivation, weakness, respiratory difficulty, nausea, convulsions, coma
Comments	Deadly, easily confused with edible camas after bloom

### Fern, bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*)

Location or Season	Fall, when pastures overgrazed
Probable Toxic Dose	Cumulative Large quantities
Toxin	Thiaminase
Symptoms	Appetite loss, timid, stupified, incoordination
Comments	

### Fiddleneck (*Amsinckia sp.*)

Location or Season	Overgrazed pastures
Probable Toxic Dose	Single dose 20 lb. or cumulative
Toxin	pyrrolizidine
Symptoms	Liver damage & failure, depression, dermatitis, incoordination, death
Comments	Similar poison to Tansy Ragwort

### Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*)

Location or Season	Acid soils
Probable Toxic Dose	VERY TOXIC (1/4 lb.)
Toxin	Digitoxin & other glycosides
Symptoms	Contracted pupils, labored breathing, convulsions, death
Comments	Rarely eaten fresh, dangerous in hay

### Hemlock, poison (*Conium maculatum*)

Location or Season	Ditches, moist disturbed areas
Probable Toxic Dose	Very toxic (5 to 10 lb.)
Toxin	Coniine and other alkaloids
Symptoms	Narcosis, paralysis, death
Comments	Hay MAY be somewhat less toxic as the poison will slowly evaporate

### Hemlock, water (*Cicuta douglasii*)

Location or Season	Low, wet areas; in spring roots pull out of ground easily
Probable Toxic Dose	VERY TOXIC (.2 to .8 lb.)
Toxin	Cicutoxin
Symptoms	Teeth grinding, muscle spasms, respiratory failure, death
Comments	Roots & stem base most toxic. The most poisonous plant known in North America

### Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*)

Location or Season	Moist areas
Probable Toxic Dose	Large quantities Cumulative
Toxin	Thiaminase
Symptoms	Thiamine deficiency causes appetite loss, incoordination
Comments	Poisoning occurs when dry plants are fed in hay

### Knapweed, Russian & Yellowstar thistle (*Centaurea spp.*)

Location or Season	Disturbed areas
Probable Toxic Dose	Cumulative 600 lb.?
Toxin	
Symptoms	Brain deterioration resulting in "Chewing disease"
Comments	Can eventually cause death by starvation

### Larkspur (*Delphinium spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	Very toxic (1 lb.)
Toxin	Alkaloids-delphinine
Symptoms	Constipation, bloat, depression, paralysis
Comments	Deadly

# Western Washington Poisonous Plants

## Western Washington Plants Known to Be Poisonous to Horses (USDA-SCS)

### Lupine (*Lupinus spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	600 to 800 lbs.
Toxin	Alkaloids-lupinine
Symptoms	Spasms, cerebral excitement & death
Comments	Can cause birth defects if eaten during pregnancy

### Nightshade, black (*Solanum spp.*)

Location or Season	Late summer, early fall, fencerows
Probable Toxic Dose	1 to 10 lb.
Toxin	Alkaloid-solanine
Symptoms	Diarrhea, convulsions, incoordination, death
Comments	

### Oak (*Quercus spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	Very large
Toxin	Tannins?
Symptoms	Constipation, blood in urine
Comments	Leaves can cause problems, acorn poisoning more common

### Ragwort, tansy & Common groundsel (*Seneclo spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	
Toxin	Alkaloid-pyrrolizidine
Symptoms	Liver Lesions, weakness, staggering, death
Comments	Liver damage is permanent. Normally avoided when fresh, eaten in hay or when wilted.

### Rhododendron (*Rhododendron spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	Small
Toxin	Glycosides
Symptoms	Vomiting, vertigo, death from respiratory failure
Comments	

### Yew (*Taxus spp.*)

Location or Season	
Probable Toxic Dose	1 to 10 lbs.
Toxin	Alkaloid-taxine
Symptoms	Gastroenteritis, labored breathing, trembling, collapse
Comments	Rarely eaten fresh, dangerous in hay

Excerpted from: Pasture Management for Horses and Ponies, Gillian McCarthy; and Plants that Poison Livestock in Thurston County, Thurston County Noxious Weed Control Agency.

#### Other resources:

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/vex/toxic/intro.htm>  
<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/vex/toxic/comlist.htm>

Cornell University  
<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/plants.html>  
<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/toxhorses.html>

Purdue University  
<http://vet.purdue.edu/depts/addl/toxic/cover1.htm>  
<http://vet.purdue.edu/depts/addl/toxic/byanim.htm>

HorseAdvice.com  
<http://www.horseadvice.com/articles/diseases/poisonmenu.html>

in Canada  
<http://res.agr.ca/brd/poisonpl/poisons.html>