Common Poisonous Plants of Western Washington That Affect Livestock\*

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| Common Name/  Scientific Name | Plant Type | Part of Plant | Degree of toxicity | Poisonous Compound | Cumu-  lative? | Livestock effects\*\* |
| Arrowgrass  (*Triglochin maritima*) |  | All | Can be severe | Glycosides (produce cyanide) |  | Under some conditions can cause illness & death in livestock. |
| Baneberry  (*Actaea rubra*) | Forb | All, esp. roots & berries | Moderate – Severe | Protoamemonin and probably a glycoside or essential oil |  | Stomach cramps, dizziness, vomiting, circulatory failure, headache. European species have caused death. |
| Bleeding-heart  (*Dicentra spp*.) | Forb | All | Mild – Moderate | Alkaloids |  | Trembling, agitation, heavy salivation, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, difficult breathing |
| Boxwood  (*Buxus sempervirens*) | Shrub | All | Moderate – Severe | Steroidal alkaloids (buxine) |  | Abdominal pains, vomiting, diarrhea. Large doses can cause convulsions, coma & death. |
| Bracken Fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) | fern | all | Mild – Severe | Thiaminase enzyme, carcinogens , often glycosides (prunasin) | yes | Thiamine deficiency, which can be fatal. Cumulative effects may include cancer. Poisonous compounds can pass into milk. |
| Buttercups (Ranunculus spp.) | Forb | All | Mild – Mod | Protoanemonin from ranunculin glycoside |  | Inflammation and blistering of skin, gastrointestinal irritation. Usually only present in fresh plants, not dried. |
| Camas, Death (Zigadenus venenosus) | Forb | All | Severe | Steroidal glycosidal alkaloid |  | Salivation, weakness, respiratory difficulty, nausea, convulsions, coma, death |
| Cherry, Choke  (*Prunus virginiana*) | Tree | Seeds, leaves, bark | Moderate – Severe | Cyanogenic glycoside (produces cyanide) |  | Initial rapid breathing followed by slow, difficult breathing, anxiety, excitement, confusion, headache, vomiting, dizziness, can cause death. Other related species which may be poisonous include mountain ash (Sorbus spp.), Hawthornes (Crataegus spp.), Pyracantha, Cotoneaster |
| Clematis  (*Clematis spp*.) | Vine | All | Mild – Moderate | Protoanemonin from ranunculin glycoside |  | Inflammation and blistering of skin, gastrointestinal irritation.  Usually only present in fresh plants, not dried. |
| Cocklebur  (*Xanthium strumarium*) | Forb | All, esp. seeds & seedlings | Moderate – severe | Glycosides |  | Loss of appetite, vomiting, weakness, ataxia, spasms, in severe cases death |

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| Crocus, Autumn  (*Colchicum autumnal*) | Forb | All, esp. bulb and seeds | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloids (colchiceine) |  | Burning pain in the mouth & throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, low blood pressure, shock, convulsions, coma, death (with larger doses) |
| Cucumber, Wild  (*Marah oreganus*) | Vine | Fruit | Mild – Severe | Saponic glycosides |  | Chest pains, shortness of breath, can cause death |
| Daffodil & Narcissus  (*Narcissus spp*.) | Forb | All, esp. bulbs | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloids (glycoside) |  | Dizziness, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. Large doses can cause trembling, convulsions & death |
| Domestic plums, cherries, peaches, apricots, apples, pears,  (*Prunus spp., Malus spp., Pyrus spp*.) |  | Seeds, leaves, bark | Mild- Moderate | Cyanogenic glycoside (produces cyanide) |  | Initial rapid breathing followed by slow, difficult breathing, anxiety, excitement, confusion, headache, vomiting, dizziness, can cause death in large quantities. Toxicity may be variable. Other related species which may be poisonous include mountain ash (Sorbus spp.), Hawthornes (Crataegus spp.), Pyracantha, Cotoneaster |
| Elderberry  (*Sambucus spp*.) | Shrub | Leaves, stems, bark and roots | Mild – Moderate | Alkaloid & cyanogenic glycoside (produced cyanide) |  | Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea. Raw fruits can cause nausea. |
| European bittersweet  (*Solanum dulcamara*) | Vine | All, especially green berries | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloidal glycoside (Solanine) |  | Abdominal pain, headache, flushed skin, tiredness. Severe cases include vomiting, thirst, difficult breathing, paralysis, dilated pupils, diarrhea, can cause death. Green potatoes contain the same chemical but in lower concentrations. |
| Fiddleneck or Tarweed  *(Amsinckia sp*.) | Forb | All | Moderate | Thiaminase,  Pyrrolizidine alkaloids | Yes | Appetite loss, timid, stupified, incoordination, liver lesions, enlarged liver (same as Tansy Ragwort) |
| Foxglove (Digitalis purpurea) | Forb | All | Severe | Digitoxin and other glycosides |  | Contracted pupils, nausea, vomiting, cramps, severe headache, irregular heartbeat, labored breathing, convulsions, death, usu. a problem only in hay |
| Golden Chain  (*Laburnum anagyroides*) | Tree | All, esp. bark & seeds | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloid (systine) – similar effects to nicotine |  | Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, drowsiness, headache, dizziness, fever, irregular heartbeat, dilated pupils. Severe cases can have convulsions, coma & death. The toxicity varies widely. |

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| Groundsel, Common  (*Senecio vulgaris*) | Forb | All | Moderate | Pyrrolizidine alkaloids | Yes | Liver lesions, enlarged liver, abdominal pain, weakness, staggering, death. Liver damage is permanent. Usually only eaten in hay or when wilted. Drying or storage doesn’t destroy toxins. |
| Hellebore, False  (*Veratrum spp*.) | Forb | All, esp. the rhizome | Moderate – Severe | alkaloids |  | Abdominal pain, vomiting diarrhea, paralysis, spasms. In severe cases can cause death. Can cause birth defects if eaten during certain gestation periods |
| Hemlock, Poison (Conium maculatum) | Forb | All | Severe | Coniine and other alkaloids |  | Teeth grinding, muscle spasms, respiratory failure, death |
| Hemlock, Water  (*Cicuta spp*.) | Forb | All, esp. root | Severe | Cicutoxin |  | Nausea, salivation, vomiting, convulsions, fever, low hear rate, abdominal pain, dilated pupils, delirium, coma, respiratory paralysis, death. Water Parsley (Oenanthe spp.) may contain similar toxin. |
| Holly, English  (*Ilex aquifolium*) | Shrub | Berries, leaves | Mild | Glycosides and alkaloids |  | Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, drowsiness. |
| Horse Chestnut *(Aesculus hippocastanum*) | Tree | all | Moderate - Severe | Saponin glycoside, alkaloids |  | Inflammation of mucous membranes, vomiting, thirst, weakness, muscular twitching, dilated pupils, stupor, paralysis. Coma & death can occur in severe cases |
| Horsetail  (*Eqisetum arvense*) | Fern-ally | all | Mild - Mod | Thiaminase | yes | Destroys vitamin B1 – Symptoms include weight loss, weakness, eventual death |
| Iris or Yellow Flag  (*Iris pseudacorus*) | Forb | All, esp. rhizomes | Moderate – Severe | Glycoside |  | Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, large doses can cause death. |
| Ivy, English  (*Hedera helix*) | Vine | All, esp. leaves & berries | Moderate | Triterpene saponins (glycosides) |  | Large quantities cause vomiting, diarrhea, spasms, staggering, paralysis |
| Knapweed, Russian and Yellowstar Thistle  (*Centaurea spp*.) | Forb | All | Moderate |  | Yes | Brain deterioration resulting in “Chewing disease”, can eventually cause death by starvation |
| Knotweeds  (*Polygonum spp*.) | Forb | All | Mild | Oxalic acid |  | Large quantities can cause interference with calcium metabolism in the body & possible phototoxicity |
| Lambsquarters  (*Chenopodium album*) | Forb | All | Mild | Oxalates |  | Large quantities can cause interference with calcium metabolism in the body & possible phototoxicity |
| Larkspur  (*Delphinium spp*.) | Forb | All | Severe | Alkaloids (delphinine) |  | Constipation, bloat, dilation of pupils, vomiting, depression, paralysis, death |

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| Laurel, English  (*Prunus laurocerasus*) | Shrub | Seeds, leaves, bark | Mild- Moderate | Cyanogenic glycoside (produces cyanide) |  | Initial rapid breathing followed by slow, difficult breathing, anxiety, excitement, confusion, headache, vomiting, dizziness, can cause death in large quantities. Toxicity may be variable. Other related species which may be poisonous include mountain ash (Sorbus spp.), Hawthornes (Crataegus spp.), Pyracantha, Cotoneaster |
| Lily of the Valley  (*Convallaria majalis*) | Forb | All | Severe | Cardiac glycosides (digitalis-like) |  | Burning pain in mouth & throat, salivation, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, headache, dilated pupils, slow & irregular heartbeat, sometimes coma and death. |
| Locust, Black or Honey  (*Robinia pseudo-acacia*) | Tree | All | Mild – Moderate | Poisonous proteins |  | Lassitude, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, delirium, coma, death in livestock in severe cases |
| Lupine  (*Lupinus spp*.) | Forb | All | Moderate | Alkaloids (lupinine) | Yes | Birth defects, spasms, vomiting, nausea, dizziness, headache, abdominal pain, & in severe cases death |
| Nightshade, Black  (*Solanum nigrum*)  Nightshade, Hairy  (*Solanum sarrachoides*) | Vine | All, especially green berries | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloidal glycoside (Solanine) |  | Abdominal pain, headache, flushed skin, tiredness. Severe cases include vomiting, thirst, difficult breathing, paralysis, dilated pupils, diarrhea, can cause death. Green potatoes contain the same chemical but in lower concentrations. |
| Oak  (*Quercus spp*.) | Tree | All, but esp. acorns | Slight | Tannins (?) |  | Constipation, blood in urine |
| Pea, Wild; Sweet Pea  (*Lathyrus spp*.) | Forb | Foliage, seeds | Mild | Toxic amino acids |  | Paralysis, convulsions, death. Toxic only in large quantities. |
| Pigweed  (*Amaranthus spp*.) | Forb | All | Mild | Oxalates, nitrates |  | Large doses can cause fluid accumulation around kidneys. |
| Poison Oak, Poison Ivy  (*Toxicodendron spp*.) | Shrub/ Vine | All | Mild – Moderate | Oleoresin (urushiol) | Yes | Itching, burning, redness of skin, blisters |
| Ponderosa Pine  (*Pinus ponderosa*) | Tree | Needles | Mild - Mod |  |  | Abortion |
| Ragwort, Tansy  (*Senecio jacobea*) | Forb | All | Moderate | Pyrrolizidine alkaloids | Yes | Liver lesions, enlarged liver, digestive disturbances, restlessness, lack of coordination, weakness, staggering, death. Liver damage is permanent. Usually only eaten in hay or when wilted. Drying or storage doesn’t destroy toxins. Toxins can contaminate milk & honey. |

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| Rhododendron  (*Rhododendron spp*.) | Shrub | All | Mild – Severe | Glycosides |  | Burning of lips, mouth, salivation, nausea, severe vomiting, coma & death in the most severe cases. The toxin can contaminate honey. |
| Rhubarb  (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) | Forb | Leaves | Moderate | Oxalic acid & oxalates (irritant poison) |  | Abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, drowsiness, large doses can cause convulsions, coma & death. Oxalic acid interferes with calcium metabolism as well |
| Scotch Broom  (*Cytisus scoparius*) | Shrub | All | Mild – Moderate | Quinolizidine alkaloids |  | Nausea, vomiting, dizziness, headache, abdominal pain |
| Serviceberry  (*Amalanchier alnifolia*) | Shrub | Leaves, twigs | Mild- Moderate | Cyanogenic glycoside (produces cyanide) |  | Initial rapid breathing followed by slow, difficult breathing, anxiety, excitement, confusion, headache, vomiting, dizziness. |
| Skunk Cabbage  (*Lysichitum americanum*) | Forb | All | Mild – Moderate | Calcium oxalate crystals |  | Physical irritation and swelling of mouth, throat, etc. as crystals pierce the skin |
| Snowberry  (*Symphoricarpos albus*) | Shrub | Berries | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloids |  | Vomiting, dizziness, semi-comatose state |
| Sorrel  (*Rumex spp*.) | Forb | All | Mild | Oxalic acid |  | Large quantities can cause interference with calcium metabolism in the body |
| St. John’s-Wort or Goatweed, Klamath Weed  (*Hypericum perforatum*) | Forb | All | Mild – Moderate | Hypericin |  | Photosensitization – blisters, swelling and lesions on the skin, particularly light-skinned animals. Subsequent exposure has more severe symptoms. Loss of appetite, diarrhea, increased respiration & heartbeat, high temp., blindness, convulsions, sometimes coma & death. Symptoms are often delayed. |
| Swamp laurel  (*Kalmia sp*.) | Shrub | Leaves, flowers | Mild – Moderate | Andromedo-toxin, arbutin |  | Burning of lips, mouth, salivation, nausea, severe vomiting, coma & death in the most severe cases. |
| Tansy, Common  (*Tanacetum vulgare*) | Forb | All | Moderate – Severe | Tanacetin |  | Rapid pulse, stomach inflammation, convulsions, abortion, occasionally fatal. However, rarely grazed because of strong taste and smell. |

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| Tarweed  (*Amsinckia spp*.) | Forb | All | Moderate | Pyrrolizidine alkaloids | Yes | Liver lesions, enlarged liver, digestive disturbances, restlessness, lack of coordination, weakness, staggering, death. Liver damage is permanent. Usually only eaten in hay or when wilted. Drying or storage doesn’t destroy toxins. |
| Vetch, Common  (*Vicia sativa*) | Forb | Foliage, seeds | Mild – Severe | Cyanogenic glycosides (produces cyanide) |  | Amount of toxins in plants highly variable. Initial rapid breathing followed by slow, difficult breathing, anxiety, excitement, confusion, headache, vomiting, dizziness, can cause death. |
| Yarrow  (*Achillea millefolium*) | Forb | All | Mild | Glucosides & alkaloids |  | If eaten in quantity can cause gastric problems. |
| Yew  (*Taxus brevifolia*) | Tree | All, except perhaps the flesh around the seed. | Moderate – Severe | Alkaloid (taxine), ephedrine, cyanogenic glycoside |  | Gastroenteritis, nausea, vomiting, diarrheas, rash, drowsiness, irregular heartbeat, labored breathing, trembling, collapse. Large amounts can cause death. |

\* Most poisonous plants are not readily consumed because they taste bad or feel bad in the mouth. Most species

included in this list are not commonly grazed but may be consumed in hay, as shrub trimmings which are left accessible, as bulbs exposed through soil-turning activities, or if there is little other feed in the pasture

or confinement area.

\*\* **Many of these plants have similar effects on humans**! The major symptoms and effects are

listed, but the list is NOT all-inclusive. Consult the local Poison Control Center for a complete

listing and information about treatment.

Sources: *Plants that Poison Livestock in Thurston County*, by Thurston County Noxious Weed Control Agency

*Pasture Management for Horses and Ponies,* by Gillian McCarthy

*Common Poisonous Plants and Mushrooms of North America* by Nancy J. Turner and Adam F. Szczawinski

*A Guide to Selected Weeds of Oregon (Supplement)*, by Hawkes, et.al., Oregon Department of Agriculture 1989

Compiled by: Marty Chaney, Pasture Management Specialist

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