



Horse 4 Life

Equine Rescue & Rehabilitation Support



H4L Guide to Field Management

Equines in the field can be at risk, especially when grass is in short supply. The following information is designed to highlight a few of the more commonly found plants potentially toxic to equines. Managing the risks to our equine friends will help to keep them healthy. Further advice is available by contacting Horse 4 Life – please see www.horse4life.org for details.



Bracken

This plant is poisonous even after cutting and drying

Symptoms can include un-coordination, pronounced heartbeat after mild exercise and muscle tremors. Untreated this can lead to convulsions and death.



Buckwheat

Can cause photosensitive dermatitis.

Symptoms include weeping irritation to the skin (dermatitis) where exposed to sunlight.



Buttercup

Buttercups have an acrid burning taste that usually deters equines from eating them. Non toxic when dried.

If eaten in large quantities, symptoms can include salivation, inflammation of the mouth, blisters and abdominal pain with convulsions usually preceding death



Cherry Laurel

Often found in parks hedges

The leaves can cause cyanide poisoning – symptoms include rapid breathing, tremors, frequent urination and defecation, gasping and convulsions



Clover

Not many reported cases in the UK, but awareness is important.

Has been associated with laminitis, sensitivity to light, and some blood disorders.



Deadly Nightshade

Entire plant is poisonous.

Symptoms may include dilated pupils, nervous excitement and inability to stand.



Foxglove

only usually eaten if found in hay

Symptoms can include an irregular pulse, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, tremors and convulsions

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Ground Ivy

Horses must ingest relatively large amounts for fatal consequences to occur.

Symptoms may include sweating, frothing at the mouth and breathing problems.



Laburnum

All parts of this tree are poisonous, particularly the bark and seeds. Fatal poisoning in horses has been reported.

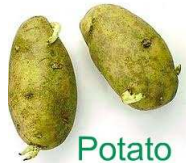
Symptoms can include abdominal pain, high temperature, tremors, unsteady gate and convulsions.



Oak Acorn

Cases have been reported where eating acorns has had little effect on horse, although there have also been reported fatalities. If eaten, there is evidence to suggest that addiction can occur in equines.

Typical symptoms may include constipation/blood stained faeces, refusal to drink, loss of appetite, flatulence, weakness/staggering, irregular/slow heart beat, and watery eyes.



Potato

Poisonous when green and sprouting. Fatalities have been reported. Also suggested that tomato plant may also be toxic.

Symptoms may include gastro-intestinal problems, weak pulse, inco-ordination, restlessness and convulsions.



Ragwort

This plant does not lose toxicity after cutting and drying, therefore contaminated hay is a concern.

Symptoms have been reported to appear several weeks/ months after ingestion, but can also be immediate. Possible symptoms include frequent yawning, lack of co-ordination, sensitivity to light, abdominal pain, diarrhoea, restlessness, depression, lack of co-ordination and paralysis.



Rhododendron

This plant is extremely poisonous, as is its cousin the Azalea. It is generally only eaten when food is scarce.

Symptoms can occur a few hours after eating it and include green, frothy salivation.



St John's Wort

This plant loses about 80% of its toxicity after cutting and drying, however contaminated hay is still a concern.

The skin may become sensitive to light, breaking out in lesions prone to infection. In more serious cases, symptoms may also include loss of appetite, staggering and coma.



Yew

All parts of the yew tree are very poisonous. In many cases symptoms are never seen, as the animal dies a few hours after eating it.

Symptoms can include: muscular tremors, staggering, convulsions, breathing difficulties, collapse and death.

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