HORTICULTURE

Pet-friendly landscaping

Outdoor adventures

Pets enjoy playing in and exploring the outdoors, not just at the park or on a walk, but also at home. Sneak a peek into a yard with pets, and they will likely be caught chomping a plant, sniffing a flower, or chasing a critter. But what if there is something in their own yard could make them sick? Is it possible to have an attractive yard that is also safe for animal companions? Illinois Extension offers helpful tips to help owners care for lawns and gardens, and keep them pet-friendly too.

Pesticides and pets

Home and pet owners should know what is being applied in their yards and the possible side effects for pets. If possible, reduce or eliminate chemical applications to lawn or garden areas that pets explore. When applying anything, always read the label and follow instructions, as many have a "re-entry period," or period of time for people or pets to stay away from treated areas. In addition, reconsider using rodenticides or other poisons because poisoned wildlife may go on to poison pets or other animals.

Pets can enjoy the outdoors in many ways.
Photo credit: Sarah Fellerer, Illinois Extension

Mulch choices

Best options:
- Arborist chips (undyed/untreated)
- Cedar
- Cypress

Options to avoid:
- Cocoa bean mulch
- Treated/colored mulch
- Chips with large chunks
- Rubber mulch
- Rocks

General yard tips

- Use fences and pathways to establish runways. Fences can help keep your pet safe, but won't stop barking. Local covenants may restrict types of fences allowed.
- Make sure pets have access to clean, fresh water at all times. If water features are accessible, make sure pets can easily get out if they happen to get into the water.
- Remove standing water to prevent mosquitoes and waterborne illnesses.
- If urine burn is an issue for your lawn, dilute spots with water after elimination or work to train pet to eliminate in a separate area.
- When salting walkways, use sparingly and only after snow removal. Sweep up excess after ice has melted. Do not use products with antifreeze/ethylene glycol.
- Secure compost bins to prevent pets from "snacking."

For lists of pet-friendly plants and plants to avoid, check out the flip-side of this handout.

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Sources:

University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine
UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine
Cornell University
Missouri Botanical Garden
North Carolina State University
Ohio State University

Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

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go.illinois.edu/petfriendlyplants

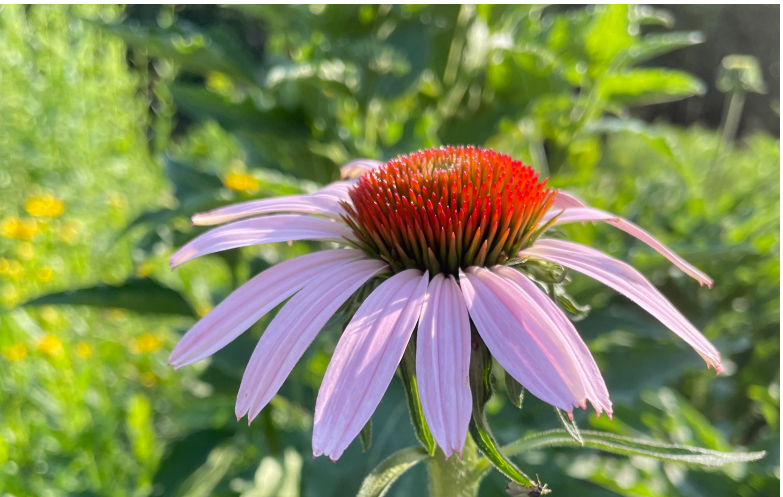
Make plant choices with pets in mind

Safe for pet snacks

- Basil
- Berries*
- Carrots
- Peas/beans
- Rosemary
- Sweet potato
- Thyme
- Zucchini

Safe ornamental plants

- Alumroot
- Bee balm
- Black-eyed Susans
- Celosia
- Common blue violet
- Common snapdragon
- Hollyhocks
- Little bluestem
- Marigolds
- Nasturtium
- Petunia
- Rex begonia
- Sunflowers
- Prairie coreopsis
- Purple coneflower
- Rosemallow
- Violet
- Wild Rose*



Coneflowers are a safe choice around pets.
Photo credit: Jamie Viebach, Illinois Extension

Lily of the Valley is toxic to both humans and pets.

Plants to avoid in pet areas

- Asparagus
- Autumn Crocus
- Castor Bean
- Chokecherry
- Daffodils
- Elderberry
- Foxglove
- Hyacinths
- Lily of the valley
- Milkweed
- Monkshood
- Onion/Garlic/Chives
- Periwinkle
- Rhododendron/Azalea
- Rhubarb
- Spring parsley
- Tomato plants
- Tulips
- Yew

*You may want to avoid plants with thorns, such as raspberries or roses.

Pet safety resources to save

Companion Animal Parasite Council capcvet.org

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) list of toxic and non-toxic plants
aspca.org/pet-care/aspca-poison-control

University of Illinois Poisonous Plant Garden
vetmed.illinois.edu/poisonplants

Pet Poison Helpline
www.petpoisonhelpline.com