

The retailers code of practice for potentially harmful plants (2000)

The Horticultural Trades Association, working with Guy's & St Thomas' Poisons Information Service and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, reviewed the toxicology of all the major genera sold through Nurseries and Garden Centres in the UK. They recommended labelling plants for which a significant hazard was identified.

Plants are labelled in three categories – A, B and C – according to the severity of the hazard. Not all parts of a plant will necessarily be a hazard. Most plants labelled under the code are perfectly safe to purchase (excepting those in Category A) as long as the warnings are heeded. However, they should not be placed or planted where small children are likely to have access to brush against or eat them.

Plant name	Common name	Warning
Category A		
<i>Rhus diversiloba, radicans, rydbergii, striata, succedanea, toxicarium, verniciflua & vernix</i>	Poison Ivy, Poison Oak	CAUTION. Poisonous if eaten. Skin contact commonly causes severe blistering dermatitis
Category B		
<i>Aconitum</i>	Monkshood, Wolfsbane	CAUTION toxic if eaten/ harmful via skin
<i>Arum</i>	Cuckoo Pint, Lords and Ladies	CAUTION toxic if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Atropa</i>	Belladonna, Deadly Nightshade	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Brugmansia</i>	Angel's Trumpets	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Colchicum</i>	Autumn Crocus	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Convallaria</i>	Lily of the Valley	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Coriaria</i>		CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Daphne</i>	Mezereon	CAUTION toxic if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Datura</i>	Jimsonweed, Stinkweed	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Dieffenbachia</i>	Dumb Cane	CAUTION toxic if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Digitalis</i>	Foxglove	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Euphorbia</i> (except <i>E. pulcherrima</i>)	Spurge	CAUTION skin & eye irritant/toxic if eaten
<i>Gloriosa superba</i>	Flame Lily	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Heracleum</i>	Hogweed	CAUTION severely toxic to skin with sunlight
<i>Hyoscyamus</i>	Henbane	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Laburnocytisus adamii</i>		CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Laburnum</i>	Golden Rain	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Lantana</i>	Shrub Verbena	CAUTION toxic if eaten

<i>Mandragora</i>	Mandrake	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Nerium</i>	Oleander	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Oenanthe crocata, aquatica & phellandrium</i>	Dead Man's Fingers	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Phytolacca</i>	Inkberry	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Primula obconica</i>	German Primula	CAUTION may cause skin allergy
<i>Ricinus communis</i>	Castor Oil Plant	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Ruta</i>	Rue	CAUTION severely toxic to skin with sunlight
<i>Scopolia</i>		CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Solandra</i>	Chalice Vine	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Woody Nightshade	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Sophora</i>	Pagoda Tree	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Taxus</i>	Yew	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Thevetia</i>	Yellow Oleander	CAUTION toxic if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Veratrum</i>	False Hellebore	CAUTION toxic if eaten
<i>Zigadenus</i>	Death Camas	CAUTION toxic if eaten
Category C		
<i>Acalypha</i>	Cat's Tail	Skin & eye irritant/ harmful if eaten
<i>Acokanthera</i>	Poison Bush	Harmful if eaten
<i>Actaea</i> section <i>Actaea</i>	Baneberry	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Adenium</i>	Desert Rose	Harmful if eaten
<i>Aesculus</i>	Horse Chestnut	Harmful if eaten
<i>Aglaonema</i>	Chinese Evergreens	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Agrostemma githago</i>	Corncockle	Harmful if eaten
<i>Allamanda</i>	Golden Trumpet	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Alocasia</i>	Giant Elephant's Ear	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Aloe</i>		Harmful if eaten
<i>Alstromeria</i>	Peruvian Lily	May cause skin allergy
<i>Amaryllis belladonna</i>	Belladonna Lily	Harmful if eaten
<i>Anthurium</i>	Flamingo Flower	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Apocynum</i>	Dogbane	Harmful if eaten
<i>Arisaema</i>	Cobra Lily	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Asparagus</i> (except <i>A. officinalis</i>)	Asparagus Fern	May cause skin allergy/ fruits harmful if eaten
<i>Brunfelsia</i>	Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow	Harmful if eaten
<i>Caladium</i>	Angel's Wings	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant

<i>Calla palustris</i>	Water Arum	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Capsicum annum</i> (ornamental cultivars)	Chilli Pepper	Skin & eye irritant/ harmful if eaten
<i>Chelidonium majus</i>	Greater Celandine	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Chrysanthemum</i>		May cause skin allergy
<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>	Taro	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Cupressocyparis leylandii</i>	Leyland Cypress	May cause skin allergy
<i>Delphinium</i>	Larkspur	Harmful if eaten
<i>Dictamnus albus</i>	Burning Bush	Skin irritant with sunlight
<i>Dracunculus</i>	Dragon Arum	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Echium</i>	Viper's Bugloss	Skin irritant
<i>Epipremnum</i>	Devil's Ivy	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Euonymus</i>	Spindle Tree	Harmful if eaten
<i>Ficus benjamina</i>	Weeping Fig	May cause skin allergy
<i>Ficus carica</i>	Common Fig	Skin irritant with sunlight
<i>Fremontodendron</i>	California Beauty	Skin & eye irritant
<i>Gaultheria</i> section <i>Pernettya</i>	Prickly Heath	Harmful if eaten
<i>Gelsemium</i>	False Jasmine	Harmful if eaten
<i>Hedera</i>	Ivy	Harmful if eaten/ may cause skin allergy
<i>Helleborus</i>	Christmas Rose, Lenten Rose	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Hippeastrum</i>	Amaryllis	Harmful if eaten
<i>Homeria</i>		Harmful if eaten
<i>Hyacinthoides</i>	Bluebell	Harmful if eaten
<i>Hyacinthus</i>	Hyacinth	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	St John's Wort	Harmful if eaten
<i>Ipomoea</i>	Morning Glory	Harmful if eaten
<i>Iris</i>	Stinking Iris	Harmful if eaten
<i>Kalmia</i>	Calico Bush	Harmful if eaten
<i>Lagenaria</i>	Bottle Gourd	Harmful if eaten
<i>Ligustrum</i>	Garden Privet	Harmful if eaten
<i>Lobelia</i> (except <i>L. erinus</i>)		Harmful if eaten
<i>Lupinus</i>	Lupin	Harmful if eaten
<i>Lysichiton</i>	Skunk Cabbage	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Mirabilis</i>	Marvel of Peru	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Monstera deliciosa</i>	Cheese Plant	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Narcissus</i>	Daffodil	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Nicotiana</i>	Tobacco	Harmful if eaten
<i>Opuntia microdasys</i>	Bunny Ears	Skin irritant
<i>Ornithogalum</i>	Star of Bethlehem	Harmful if eaten
<i>Papaver somniferum</i>	Opium Poppy	Harmful if eaten
<i>Passiflora caerulea</i>	Passion Flower	Harmful if eaten
<i>Pedilanthus</i>	Slipper Cactus	Skin & eye irritant/ harmful if

		eaten
<i>Philodendron</i>		Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Podophyllum</i>	May Apple	Harmful if eaten
<i>Polygonatum</i>	Solomon's Seal	Harmful if eaten
<i>Polyscias</i>	Dinner Plate Aralia	Harmful if eaten/ skin irritant
<i>Prunus laurocerasus & lusitanica</i>	Cherry Laurel, Portugal Laurel	Seed kernels harmful if eaten
<i>Rhamnus</i>	Buckthorn	Harmful if eaten
<i>Rhaphidophora</i>	Shingle Plant	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i>	False Acacia	Harmful if eaten
<i>Sambucus</i> (except <i>S. nigra</i>)	Elder	Harmful if eaten
<i>Schefflera</i>	Umbrella Plant	May cause skin allergy
<i>Scilla</i>		Harmful if eaten
<i>Solanum</i> (cultivated ornamental species except <i>S. dulcamara</i> [see Category B])	Potato Vine	Harmful if eaten
<i>Spartium junceum</i>	Spanish Broom	Harmful if eaten
<i>Spathiphyllum</i>	Peace Lily	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Symphoricarpos</i>	Snowberry	Harmful if eaten
<i>Symphytum</i>	Comfrey	Harmful if eaten
<i>Syngonium</i>	Arrowhead Vine	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Tabernaemontana</i>	Cape Jasmine	Harmful if eaten
<i>Tulipa</i>	Tulip	Harmful if eaten/ may cause skin allergy
<i>Vitex</i>	Chaste Tree	Skin irritant
<i>Wisteria</i>		Harmful if eaten
<i>Xanthosoma</i>	Blue Taro	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant
<i>Zantedeschia</i>	Arum Lily	Harmful if eaten/ skin & eye irritant

Do not assume that any plant not included in this list is safe to eat. Only parts of plants expressly grown to be eaten should be considered to be edible. Plants are not included if they have not been implicated in cases of human poisoning, or if there is evidence that when eaten they cause no or only mild adverse effects, such as an upset stomach.

This list has been reproduced from 'harmless?', the Horticultural Trades Association leaflet relating to the retailers code of practice for potentially harmful plants.