

Cleaners, Paint, and Mulch – Oh My!

Let's keep our pets safe while we update our homes and gardens!



Cleaning Products



- **Cleaners, detergents, and chemicals** – these can all pose a threat to our pets. Whether it be mild irritation of the mouth and oral cavity or, to the extreme, a life-threatening poisoning, preventing pets from exposure is key. Consider child-proof locks on the cabinets where cleaning products are stored and clean when pets cannot have any access to the area until products have been rinsed away or dried fully.
- **Natural products** - no product is automatically safe! Do not assume that a “natural cleaning product” is pet-safe. There are no firm industry standards for what constitutes a natural cleaning product so there may be ingredients that are not as “natural” as you think. Plenty of natural substances are still toxic to pets!



Home Improvement

- **All components of a painting project** – the paint, solvents, and products used to clean supplies - pose a risk to pets. That risk is heightened for cats who might walk through the paint or chemical, then groom the substance off their feet or coat.
- **Nails, blades, and power tools** – curious pets can injure themselves by picking up objects in their mouths, swallowing/ingesting objects or in fact operating a tool unintentionally. Prevent your pet from entering any work space until the area has been fully cleaned up.



Gardens and Landscaping

- **Toxic plants** – many pet owners are aware of the risks of toxic plants. When selecting plants, shrubs or trees to include in your yard, check the ASPCA list of poisonous plants to insure the safety of your pets.
- **Sago palms** – Sago palms are popular in this area and all parts of it are considered poisonous, with the seeds/nuts being the most toxic part of the plant. Sago palms contains cycasin, the primary active toxic agent resulting in severe liver failure in dogs. Ingestion causes drooling, lack of appetite, vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy, abnormal fluid accumulation in the abdomen, abdominal pain, jaundice, and tarry stools. Other symptoms include weakness, ataxia, seizures, and liver failure. Seek veterinary care immediately if there is suspected ingestion.
- **Mulch** – the harm caused to dogs from chewing on mulch has been underestimated. Swallowing mulch can cause a gastrointestinal obstruction, sometimes requiring surgery. Mulch is often treated with paint, dye, or other chemicals to make it resistant to color-fade or other aesthetic concerns. These chemicals can be harmful when ingested by a pet. Some products are even made with used coffee grounds – which sounds natural and environmentally-conscious – yet results in life-threatening caffeine toxicity. Do not permit pets to chew mulch.
- **Fertilizers, insecticides, and herbicides** – each of these products are a risk to your pet. Read product labels and follow instructions carefully; do not allow your pet out into the yard until a safe period of time has passed since application of any product. Keep products locked away and secured!

Information courtesy of Robyn Smith, DVM,
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