

Plants your small animal will love

There are a number of plants, in addition to grass, that your small animal will relish and can be of great nutritional benefit, as well as a welcome treat. These include:

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|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Acorn | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dandelion | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantain |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Alfalfa | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fruit trees | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rose |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beech | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Grounsel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shepherds purse |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Beechnuts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hawthorn berries | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sow thistle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Chickweed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazel | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sunflower |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clover | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hogweed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thistle |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Coltsfoot | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Knotted persicaria | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vetch |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Comfrey | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lady's thumb | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wheat and barley |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corn marigold | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Lucerne | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Willow |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Corn spurry | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meadow horsetail | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yarrow |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cow parsley | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nettles | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Young oak leaves |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Daisy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oxeye | |

Russel Rabbit and Gerty Guinea Pig contain many different ingredients to provide a complete coarse mix. However the occasional fresh treat is always welcome.


Supreme

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RUSSEL & GERTY'S Guide to Dangerous Plants



PROMOTING THE WELL-BEING OF SMALL ANIMALS

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Introduction

Feeding plants to your Rabbit & Guinea Pigs can add variety and interest to their diets, these plants provide essential nutrients such as fibre, protein, vitamins and minerals that are essential to the animal's health.

However some plants can be very harmful to small animals if eaten, causing illness, distress, discomfort and potentially – death.

Rabbits and Guinea Pigs are natural herbivores and in the wild live on a variety of green plants, roots and fruits. So needless to say they require an element of this in their diet in captivity.

You will soon become familiar with the plants that your small animal prefers, this guide is to assist you in identifying plants that may be harmful to your pet thereby avoiding potential dangers to your rabbit or guinea pig. Small animals may not instinctively avoid poisonous plants.

Dangerous Plants

The following are plants that are harmful to small animals. If you are unsure of what any of these plants look like, pictures can be found in books from your local library, or ask for advice at your local garden centre.

Amongst the most poisonous are species such as: anemone, azalea, bitter-sweet, bryony, caladium, cyclamen, columbine, dog mercury, figwort, deadly nightshade, woody nightshade, poppies, ragwort, buttercups, daffodils, bluebells, foxglove, hemlock,

spurge, kingcup, marsh marigold, monkshood, meadow saffron, mistletoe, St. Johns wort, Leyland cypress, fools parsley and hellebore. Your garden may also contain cultivated plants that may cause illness such as: dahlias, lupins, chrysanthemums, delphinium, lily of the valley, tulips, iris, morning glory, antirrhinums, lobelia, fig, Jerusalem cherry, juniper, hyacinth, privet, yew, laburnum, lords and ladies, ivy, philodendron, rhododendron, wisteria, clematis, holly and most evergreen trees.

What harm these plants can do to small animals

The garden can be a very dangerous place, if your pet is running free, as you may not be familiar with harmful plants that may be growing in your garden. Eating poisonous plants can affect your pet in a variety of ways. Symptoms range from a stomach upset to possible fatality. Other symptoms include: salivation, skin allergies and heart and breathing difficulties. Rodents and Lagomorphs are incapable of vomiting and so harmful plants usually inducing this symptom may go undiagnosed. They may undergo physiological stress after ingesting those which are irritating to the digestive tract.

Presentation of Plants

Spring is the time that new shoots begin to appear in your garden, these can be included into your small animals diet. Introduce slowly into the animals diet to prevent gastrointestinal problems in response to abrupt dietary changes. Their stomach needs time to adjust slowly or conditions such as diarrhoea and bloating may occur.

Rinse any collected plants with water to remove any residue that may be on them. If you collect plants for your Rabbit and Guinea Pigs ensure that they are stored properly, as they can become dusty, mouldy or even begin to ferment, which may then cause bloating to your small animal. Any uneaten plants in their cage need to be removed for the same reason.

It is also important to consider any possible chemicals that may have been used in the area in which the small animal lives or where you have collected the plants, such as pesticides and herbicides. These contain lethal contaminants, the residues of which may still be present. Many products are now formulated to be safe to small animals so ensure you check the product label before using in your garden.

When collecting plants to place in your pet's home from roadsides, parks & fields the same principles apply. Plants on the roadside may look inviting but may be covered in dirt and exhaust fumes, leaving lead deposits, and the result may be lethal. Farmers routinely use chemicals to control pests and weeds and the plants you collect may have residues of these on them.

Avoid plants collected from parks or fields where dogs may have walked, or contain livestock, as disease can be transmitted through urine and faeces left on the plant.

Prevention

If you have any of these plants in your garden there are a number of things you can do to prevent harm to your Rabbit or Guinea Pig. If your small animal has free run of the garden

then you will need either to remove the plant or prevent the animal from being able to eat it. This can be done by securing the surrounding area of the plant with a piece of chicken wire.

If your small animal is contained within a run ensure the plant is not in contact with the wire as they may be able to nibble or reach through. Always carefully identify any plants before you feed them to your small animal, as many harmful plants are similar in appearance to those that are not harmful.

First Aid

If you are in any doubt do not feed or let your pet eat plants, that you are unsure of. If your Rabbit or Guinea Pig becomes ill after being in the garden or after being fed plants, and you suspect poisoning, a vet should be consulted immediately.

Diagnosis of a particular poisoning can be difficult unless the rabbit is seen eating a specific plant. If so, the plant should be taken to the vet for assistance in diagnosis. The vet may administer fluids and gut protectants and treat symptomatically.

Try to keep the animal warm and quiet to comfort the animal and minimize shock. Fluids can be given if the animal is interested and may assist in diluting and flushing the agent through.

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Fatal



Toxic



Skin allergy



Gastro Intestinal Irritation



Salivation



Cardiovascular