

# Hot Weather Hazards

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## **Top 10 Garden Hazards for your Pets**

1. **Poisonous Plants** - Many outdoor plants are toxic to cats and dogs. Sago Palm and other Cycad Family plants and mushrooms can cause liver failure. Rhododendron, azalea, lily of the valley, oleander, rosebay, foxglove and kalanchoe affect the heart. See a full illustrated list at <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/plants/>.

2. **Fertilizer** - Ingesting large amounts of fertilizer can give your pet stomach upset that can result in a serious gastrointestinal obstruction. Follow fertilizer instructions carefully and make sure you wait an appropriate amount of time before letting your pet on the grass.

3. **Cocoa Mulch** - This mulch smells great and looks fantastic, it's toxic to dogs. These cocoa bean shells are a by-product of chocolate production and attract dogs with their sweet smell. Depending on how much your dog ingests, like with regular chocolate, they can experience a range of clinical signs - vomiting, diarrhea, muscle tremors, elevated heart rate, hyperactivity or even seizures. Shredded pine, cedar or hemlock bark are less toxic alternatives, but dogs should always be supervised where mulch is present.

4. **Insecticides** - Herbicides, insecticide baits, sprays and granules keep your garden healthy, but are toxic to your pets. The most dangerous are: snail bait with metaldehyde, fly bait with methomyl, systemic insecticides with disyston or disulfoton, mole or gopher bait with zinc phosphide and most forms of rat poison. Always store insecticides out of your pet's reach and read manufacturer's labels carefully.

5. **Compost** - Composting is great for the planet and your garden, but your pets can get their paws on toxic foods in your compost pile. Coffee, moldy food and certain types of fruits and vegetables are toxic to dogs and cats so make sure you keep harmful foods out of their reach. Visit <http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/poison-control/people-foods.aspx> to see a list of toxic people food.

6. **Fleas and Ticks** - Fleas may cause excessive scratching, hair loss, scabs, hot spots and tapeworms as well as anemia from blood loss in both dogs and cats. Ticks can have similar effects and lead to complications from tick-borne diseases such as Lyme disease. Keep your lawns mowed and trimmed and apply a topical treatment available at any pet store to avoid infestation.

7. **Bee Stings** - Position plants with sweet nectar (most likely to attract bees) in areas your dog cannot access. For wasp and hornet stings, scrape the area with a credit card to remove venom, pack the area with ice and use an anti-itching cream like calamine lotion or Benadryl cream. Contact your veterinarian immediately if your dog shows anaphylactic symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea, wheezing, trembling, chills or collapse.

8. **Sharp Decorative Edging** - Steel edging is common in garden design to separate sod and mulch or stone. Although a safety cap is available they are not always installed and they can pop off in harsh weather, exposing a sharp edge. If you have steel edging, make sure you install a safety cap or use a roll top edging instead.

9. **Escape** - We've all seen the flyers for lost dogs or cats and maybe felt a little relief our pet is safe at home. It can happen to anyone and you can take some simple measure to prevent escape. If your dog likes to dig, sink chicken wire or chain link horizontally under the fence to prevent burrowing. Also, pounding vinyl lattice two feet down into the ground can help. Make sure your fence is secure and replace missing or loose areas. If your dog is trying to jump at or over the fence to see outside, consider installing a window secured with chicken wire.

10. **Sunburn/Sunstroke** - Dogs and cats are just as sensitive to heat as people and pets with light skin pigmentation or with little fur are susceptible to sunburn. Dog sunscreen can be purchased from a veterinarian or pet store. Check your dog after sun exposure and contact your vet for treatment of the sunburned area. Your dog may have heatstroke if you notice collapse, heavy panting, drooling, or temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure your dog has plenty of water available and takes breaks from the heat. If you believe your dog has heatstroke, wet his ears and feet to begin cooling him and call your veterinarian immediately.

Sources: [www.asPCA.org](http://www.asPCA.org); [www.thecoloradodog.com](http://www.thecoloradodog.com)