

Bird Safety Corner

Plants

There is often confusion over which plants are safe around birds and which aren't. Since no one's going to test plants for safety in birds, reports are anecdotal. There are many lists available of bird-toxic and bird-safe plants, but they don't always agree, which is confusing. The bottom line is that if a plant appears as unsafe on any list, why



risk exposing your bird to it? The best advice is to look at several lists to get the best consensus on plant safety, especially if you are researching plantings for an aviary.



Remember that even safe plants can cause gastrointestinal upset, like eating an entire chocolate cake at one sitting!

Plant toxicity depends on several things – the **type of plant**, the **species of bird**, and the **amount ingested** relative to the size of the bird. A large cockatoo can generally tolerate more of a toxic plant than a canary.



Sometimes plants are **treated with colors and sparkles**, especially at the holidays, so even a normally safe plant could become unsafe. Also be careful of **soil additives** and **lead-glazed pots** which birds could chew on.

Here are some good **resources** you can use to help determine plant safety:

Bird Safe House Plants: A Shopper's Guide published by RSS in Millbrae, CA (now online at www.perchfactory.com/other_pages/bird-safe-house-plants.htm). This a great resource and identifies plants listed as both safe and unsafe in source material! It also has plants by both common name and botanical name.

Online:

www.peteducation.com/article.cfm?c=15+1912&aid=2236
www.plannedparrothood.com/plants.html

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