

## General Guidelines for Avoiding Plant Toxicity in Grazing Animals in the Cayman Islands

**First**, familiarize yourself with the plants listed in this pamphlet, and avoid tethering animals near them. If present in your paddock, these plants should be removed.

**Next**, watch for signs of poisoning in your animals. These may include excessive salivation, trembling, lack of appetite, vomiting and diarrhea.

**Finally**, if you suspect your animal has been exposed to plant toxins, **contact your veterinarian immediately**. If possible, take a picture or clipping from suspected plants for proper identification.

Different poisonous plants contain toxins that can affect animals in unique ways. For example, **Maiden plum** has a sap that irritates the skin and can cause blistering, while **Oleander** can affect the heart.

### Castor-oil Plant

(*Ricinus communis*)

A woody herb up to 5m found all over the Cayman Islands, the castor bean, or castor oil plant, has distinctive leaves, a spiny fruit and stems that may be red. All parts should be considered poisonous. Signs of ingestion include watery or bloody diarrhea, profuse sweating, vomiting, loss of appetite, and convulsions.



### Lantana

(*Lantana camara*)

Perennial shrub with serrated leaves and yellow to orange flowers.

Animals that ingest this plant may have watery or bloody diarrhea, white gums, and be gasping for air. Some may also develop skin lesions.



### Wild Allamanda

(*Urechites lutea*)

Also called Yellow Nightshade. This vine is not as toxic as 'deadly' nightshade (not found in Cayman) but can cause excess salivation, dilated pupils, laboured breathing and severe colic in cattle and horses, stress should be avoided. Symptoms are less severe in goats and sheep.



### Manchineel Tree

(*Hippomane mancinella*, "beach apple")

One of the most poisonous plants in the world (except to iguanas!) all parts are toxic, including water dripping from its leaves!

Found on or near the beach, don't eat these greenish-yellow apples!

It has been reported that even the water dripping from the leaves of this tree can cause severe skin blistering. This plant contains a caustic sap that can be transferred to owners from animals that have walked past its leaves. If eaten, irritation of the mouth and swelling of the throat can result in animals refusing to eat or drink. This can cause animals to be unable to swallow or may even block their airway making them unable to breathe.

These symptoms are reasons why this plant has been called the "Acid Tree".

### **Oleander**

(*Nerium Oleander*)  
Evergreen shrub with narrow leaves up to 30 cm. Red, yellow or pink flowers cluster at tips of branches.

Ingesting fresh or dry leaves or stems may cause vomiting, diarrhea, frequent urination, weakness and death.



### **Johnson Grass**

(*Sorghum*)  
Grows in pastures and roadsides, and toxin accumulates in bales.

Animals that ingest the bale may have labored breathing, diarrhea, excessive salivation, and muscle tremors. Horses may be more sensitive. Avoid as the sole food source.



### **Maiden plum**

(*Comocladia dentata*)

A large bush which grows aggressively in cleared areas and fence lines. Stem and leaf sap produces an itchy, blistering rash that can last for weeks and may leave scars.

An animal that has brushed against this plant may have sap on its hide. This can be transferred to you, so wear protective clothing and wash well after handling or petting animals that have been outdoors.



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# **Plants Toxic to Grazing Animals in the Cayman Islands**



## **A Guide for Owners of Grazing Animals**

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