

GOATS - Poisonous Plants

The plants pictured below are those most commonly encountered in cases of poisoning. However, there are other plants poisonous to goats which should be avoided: Yew, Deadly Nightshade, Pine Trees, Cherry Tree, St John's Wort, Hemp, and Ivy.



RHODODENDRON

This is the most common type of poisoning seen and even a few leaves can cause symptoms to develop. Characteristically the goat will retch, salivate and become very dull and depressed, with the development of laboured breathing after several days.

RAGWORT

This plant is very common in the UK and causes severe damage to the liver. The damage is gradual and irreversible and there is no treatment for affected animals. The symptoms seen are due to the liver damage and include loss of condition, poor appetite with resultant weight loss and anaemia. In very severe cases the eyes and mouth become yellow due to the development of jaundice. Hay containing dried ragwort is still dangerous.



KALE

This is frequently fed to cattle and sometimes goats. Excessive quantities can result in damage to the red blood cells which subsequently rupture. This results in the goat passing red urine with weakness and anaemia developing later. If caught early then the only treatment that is usually necessary is to move the goat off the kale and onto other forages such as hay or grass.



OAK LEAF

Excessive feeding of oak leaves over a long period of time may cause damage to the bone marrow which ultimately results in anaemia. However, when fed in moderation, oak leaves are fairly harmless.



FRUIT TREE LEAF

The leaves of the Prunus family of trees are poisonous to goats as they contain the compound Amygdalin. When fresh, the leaves do not cause any harm, but when dry this compound changes and binds to the red blood cells so that they can no longer carry oxygen and the goat suffers from respiratory distress.