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POISONOUS PLANTS • A GLOSSARY OF COMMONLY USED TERMS

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- abortion** • premature birth of a non-viable fetus
acute • brief and severe, as in the course of a disease or poisoning
aglycone • the noncarbohydrate component produced on the hydrolysis of a glycoside; typically the pharmacologically active fraction
alkaloid • a nitrogenous ring compound distinguished by its basic reactions and its pharmacological activity
allergen • a substance that produces an allergic reaction
alopecia • loss of hair, often in clumps
analgesic • a substance that relieves pain without causing loss of consciousness
anemia • a condition in which the number of red blood cells is decreased
anorexia • loss of appetite
anoxia • deficiency of oxygen
antihelminthic • a substance that expels worms; a vermifuge
antipyretic • an agent that counteracts fever
antispasmodic • a substance that relieves cramps
antidote • an agent that neutralizes a poison or counteracts its effects
antipyretic • an agent that counteracts fever
antispasmodic • an agent that relieves cramps
anuria • failure of kidney function
ascites • an abnormal accumulation of fluids in the abdominal cavity
asphyxia • a condition in which the brain is deprived of oxygen, leading to unconsciousness
astrigent • a substance that reduces bleeding or secretion of body fluids
ataxia • loss of muscle coordination in the arms and legs resulting in jerky, irregular motion
- bezoar** • a concretion of hair or plant material found in the stomach or intestines of animals, especially ruminants; also known as hairballs
bloat • a distension of the rumen or large colon by gases of fermentation
bradycardia • a slow rate of heart contraction, typically defined as fewer than 60 beats per minute
- carcinogen** • a cancer-producing substance
cardiovascular • pertaining to the heart, blood vessels, and circulation
carminative • a substance that relieves flatulence
cathartic • a substance that evacuates the bowels; a laxative
chronic • of slow progress and long duration
cirrhosis • a progressive fibrosis of the liver
CNS • central nervous system
co-carcinogen • a non-carcinogenic agent that promotes cancerous growths
colic • spasm in any hollow or tubular organ, accompanied by pain
colon • the large intestine
coma • a prolonged state of unconsciousness
congenital • a congenital or physical abnormality present before or at birth
congestion • an excessive accumulation of blood or liquid in an organ
conjunctivitis • inflammation of the mucous membrane that lines the eyelids and eyeball
cyanogenic [-genetic] • yielding or producing cyanide
cyanosis • a slightly bluish, grayish, slate-like or dark purple discoloration of the skin
- demulcent** • a substance that soothes an irritated mucous membrane
depression • a lowering of vital signs
dermatitis • an inflammation of the skin, as evidenced by itching, redness, vesicles, and lesions
dermatosis • any skin disease, especially one that does not cause inflammation
diaphoretic • a substance that causes perspiration
diastole • the dilation or relaxation phase of the cardiac cycle
diuretic • an agent that stimulates urine production
druse • an irregularly-shaped crystalline deposit, often of calcium oxalate
duodenum • the part of the small intestine that leads from the stomach
dyspepsia • indigestion
dysphagia • difficulty in swallowing
dyspnea • labored or painful breathing

ED • effective dose

edema • a condition in which tissues contain an excessive amount of fluid

effective dose • the amount of a medicine or toxin that will produce the desired results

electrolyte • a compound which, in aqueous solution, readily dissociates into electrically charged particles and makes possible the conduction of an electric current through the solution

emaciation • a state of abnormal leanness

emesis • vomiting

emetic • an agent that causes vomiting

emmenagogue • a substance that facilitates and regularizes menstrual flow

emollient • a substance that reduces inflammation and irritation; having the power to soften tissues

enteritis • inflammation of the mucous and submucous tissues of the intestine

epidermis • the surface layer of the skin

ergotism • a condition caused by the ingestion of grain infected by the ergot fungus; characterized by cramps, spasms, hallucinations, gangrene, and loss of extremities

erythema • diffused redness of the skin

erythrocyte • a blood cell that contains hemoglobin, a pigment that imparts a red color

expectorant • a substance that encourages the expulsion of saliva and mucous from air passages

favism • an inherited, acute, hemolytic anemia occurring in individuals with defective erythrocytes who eat fava beans

FDF • Fast Death Factor

febrifuge • a substance that counteracts fever

fibrosis • the formation of fibrous tissue at abnormal sites

fornication • the sensation of ants or other small creatures crawling upon the body; not to be confused with fornication, an activity that is characterized by a different set of sensations

galactogenic • a substance that increases milk production

gangrene • the death of soft tissues, usually as a result of obstruction of the blood supply

gastric lavage • washing out the stomach by means of a solution introduced by a catheter

gastritis • inflammation of the stomach

gastroenteritis • inflammation of the stomach and intestine

gastrointestinal • pertaining to the stomach and intestines

GI tract • the gastrointestinal tract

glucoside • a glycoside of glucose

glycoside • a compound made by plants, which upon hydrolysis, yields a sugar and an aglycone, the latter being typically pharmacologically active

goiter • an abnormally enlarged thyroid gland

goitrogenic • a substance that induces goiter

hairball • see bezoar

hematuria • the condition of having blood in the urine

hemoglobin • the protein that carries oxygen in the blood of vertebrates

hemolytic • pertaining to the destruction of red blood cells

hemorrhage • an abnormal discharge of blood, either internally or externally

hepatic • pertaining to the liver

hepatitis • an inflammation of the liver

hepatotoxic • a substance that can damage the liver

hydrolysis • the chemical splitting of compounds into simpler one with the presence of water

hypertensive • a substance that causes an increase in blood pressure

hypoglycemia • a condition of abnormally low levels of blood glucose

hypotensive • a substance that causes a decrease in blood pressure

inflammation • a condition characterized by redness, warmth, swelling, and pain

intoxication • a condition of being poisoned by alcohol, a drug, or a toxic substance

intravenous • into a vein, as in an injection

jaundice • a yellowish discoloration of the skin, the white of the eyes, mucous membranes, and body fluids as a result of increased bile pigment production

lacrimation • discharge of tears

lathyrism • a neurological disorder characterized by tremors, muscular weakness, and paralysis, of the lower limbs and body, the result resulting from the ingestion of toxic amounts of sweet peas [*Lathyrus* spp.]

LD • lethal dose

LD 50 • the lowest dose of a substance that is fatal to 50% of the test animals

LD 100 • ... 100% ...

lectin • a plant protein that causes agglutination and precipitation; resembles antibodies in mode of action

lesion • an injury or wound

leucocyte • a white blood cell, one that acts to counter foreign substances and disease

lymph • the clear, transparent fluid that flows in the lymphatic vessels of the body

lymphocyte • a white blood cell found in lymphoid tissue, having a large, spherical nucleus surrounded by a thin layer of non-granular cytoplasm

minimum lethal dose • amount of toxin that is the average of the smallest dose that kills and the largest dose that fails to kill

mitogen • a substance that stimulates mitosis and lymphocyte transformation

mitotic poison • a substance that prevents or affects the completion of mitosis

MLD • minimum lethal dose

monogastric • simple-stomached, as opposed to the multiple-stomached ruminants

morbid • diseased

mortality • the condition of being subject to death

mucosa • the mucous membrane that lines the passages and cavities of the body

mutagen • a substance that causes a mutation

mydriatic • a substance that causes dilation of the pupils

narcosis • a state of unconsciousness

narcotic • a substance that induces stupor, sleep (original meaning), coma or that reduces pain

necrosis • the death of tissues or organs

neoplasm • a new growth of different or abnormal tissue; a tumor

nephritis • inflammation of the kidney

neurological • pertaining to the nervous system

neuromuscular • pertaining to the nerves that connect the brain and spinal cord to the rest of the body

oxalate • a salt of oxalic acid

paresthesia • an abnormal sensation, such as tingling, itching, pricking, numbness, or heightened sensitivity

paroxysm • a sudden periodic attack or recurrence of symptoms

PEM • polioencephalomalacia

peritoneum • the membrane that lines the abdominal cavity

PHA • phytohemagglutinin, the toxic protein in red kidney beans

photodermatitis • a form of dermatitis in which the allergen is activated by sunlight

photosensitization • a condition in which the skin reacts abnormally to light

phytophotodermatitis • see photodermatitis

piscicide • a substance that poisons or kills fish; ichthyotoxic

polypeptide • a chain of amino acids linked together by peptide bonds

post mortem • after death, as in an examination

prostration • absolute exhaustion

pruritus • an itch that provokes the urge to scratch

PSL Syndrome • a disorder characterized by perspiration, salivation, and lacrimation

pulmonary • relating to the lungs

purgative • a substance that promotes evacuation of the bowels; a cathartic

PWM • the lectin found in pokeweed

raphide • a long, needle-shaped crystal, usually composed of calcium oxalate

raticide • a substance used to kill rats

recumbent • lying down

remission • a lessening or abatement of symptoms

renal • pertaining to the kidneys

retching • an involuntary attempt at vomiting; also known as dry heaving

respiratory • relating to or affecting the organs involved in taking in oxygen and expelling carbon dioxide

risus sardonicus • a peculiar distorted grin caused by acute spasms of facial muscles, as seen in strychnine poisoning

rodenticide • a substance that poisons or kills rodents

rumen • the first stomach of a ruminant

ruminant • a multiple-stomached, cloven-hoofed, cud-chewing mammal, such as cattle, deer, buffalo, and antelopes

saponin • a glycoside characterized by foaming when shaken in water and by producing hemolysis when present in the bloodstream

scoliosis • a condition characterized by sideways curvature of the spine

SDS • Sudden Death Syndrome, the name used for various sudden cardiovascular disorders that are lethal

stillbirth • a fetus born without signs of life

stupor • a condition of unconsciousness, torpor, or lethargy with suppression of the senses and of feeling

symptomatic • aimed at alleviating specific clinical signs

synapse • the point of junction between two neurons, where the end of the axon of one neuron come into close proximity with the cell body or dendrites of the other

syndrome • a group of clinical signs, which taken collectively, indicate a certain condition or disease

systole • the contraction phase of the cardiac cycle

tachycardia • abnormally rapid heart action, typically defined as over 100 beats per minute

teratogen • a substance that causes the production of deformed embryos

tetanic seizures • a spasm with constant muscular contractions caused by calcium deficiency and parathyroid gland malfunctioning
tetany • a nervous condition characterized by intermittent muscular contraction
tinnitus • a ringing, buzzing, or roaring sensation in the ears
thrombosis • the formation of a blood clot within a vessel
torticollis • spasmodic contraction of the neck muscles, such that the head is drawn in one direction, while the chin points in the opposite direction
toxicosis • a pathological condition caused by a toxin
tremor • a quivering, especially a continuous one of a convulsive nature
trocar • a tubular instrument with a triangular tip used to penetrate the body to remove fluids

urticaria • a skin rash caused by the local release of histamines and other substances

vasoconstrictor • a substance that causes constriction of blood vessels
vasodilator • a substance that causes dilation of blood vessels
ventricular fibrillation • a condition resulting in rapid, ineffective contractions of the ventricles of the heart
VFDF • Very Fast Death Factor
vomiting • the act of ejecting stomach contents through the mouth

[Revised: January 2022]