



SUBJECT: In the Deadly Nightshade Garden

RECIPIENTS: All Schools

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Potentially harmful plants

Serious poisoning by plants is relatively uncommon in the UK (RHS.org). Some garden plants present a hazard, but the risk of severe poisoning, skin reaction or allergy is generally low. However, plants that grow wild can present particular hazards as there are fewer controls in place to prevent animals and people – especially curious children – from gaining access to them. Deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), for example, can be found growing wild all over the UK, usually in scrubland areas and woodland, and along paths and banks. It favours chalky soil. Both the leaves and berries are poisonous if ingested, and can cause hallucinations and delirium.

Appearance

Deadly nightshade is a perennial plant with long, slim branches. Its leaves are oval shaped and non-serrated, grow on stalks in an alternate pattern and have pointed edges. They are poisonous if ingested. Its flowers are bell-shaped, around 3cm long, with purple and green colouration, and its berries are black and shiny.



What to do if ingested

Seek immediate medical advice from a hospital A&E department, taking a sample of the plant with you. Do NOT try to make the person vomit.

Do's

Do teach children not to play with, or eat, growing plants

Do use gloves when pruning and weeding, and keep skin covered to avoid potential irritants

Don'ts

Don't eat plants if they are not food plants, and if you cannot identify them

Don't leave prunings or uprooted plants in reach of children, animals or pets

www.woodlandtrust.org

If you require further assistance or clarification on the subject please contact:
corporatehealth&safety@lincolnshire.gov.uk