



## Leavers and Joiners!

We have said goodbye to our Hawkhurst RVN Megan Giles (4) who is going to Australia and our long serving Kingsnorth vet of 10 years. Jillian Hall (2) who has taken on the challenge of locum work, you will still see Jillian providing some locum cover for us in the future, and Richard Williams (3) has also retired from the practice after nearly 30 years! Our Rye clients and pets will be in the capable hands of Head Vet Jenny Jordan along with James Mursell and Clotilde Abeloos. We are sure Richard will enjoy taking it easy and probably a spot of sailing to sunnier climes in his spare time!

We have welcomed new receptionist Jenny Uden (1) to Kingsnorth as well as a new vet Emma Baker and RVN Dolma Gurung.



## Petplan Nominations

Well done to Esther Masso and our Tenterden team, and Vanessa Martin and the whole Cinque Ports Vets team for receiving nominations in the Petplan Veterinary Awards!



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## Protecting your Rabbit

Your rabbit should be protected against two major diseases called Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease RHD1 and RHD2. These can be potentially fatal. All types of rabbit are potentially susceptible, including house rabbits.

### Myxomatosis

Myxomatosis is a widespread disease caused by a virus. The disease is spread by blood-sucking insects such as the rabbit flea and mosquitoes. When an infected insect bites a rabbit, a small amount of the virus is placed in their skin as the insect feeds. Within a few days the virus passes into the rabbit's blood spreading it to several sites. The virus mainly multiplies in the skin around the eyes, nose, face, skin inside their ears and around the anus and genitalia areas. It is best to try and prevent your rabbit from coming into contact with wild rabbits as they tend to carry a lot of fleas and can themselves be infected.

Generally the first sign of infection that you will notice are puffy eyes, lips and ears as well as swellings around their genitalia. Within 24 hours these swellings can become very severe, eating and drinking becomes more difficult and unfortunately death usually occurs within 2 weeks of infection. Some rabbits do survive the disease with intensive nursing but they are usually left with severe scarring and scabs over their body.

There is no specific treatment for Myxomatosis so it is vital that you ensure your rabbit is protected against it.

The most effective way to do this is by flea and insect control and vaccination. Spot on treatments are available to protect your rabbit against fleas and nets over their hutches will help with mosquito control.

### Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Strain 1 and 2

RHD (also known as Viral Haemorrhagic Disease) is a viral disease which is spread between rabbits by direct contact but also by indirect contact via people, clothing, on shoes, other objects and fleas.

The signs are usually:

- Depression • Collapse • Difficulty in breathing • Convulsions (fits)
- Bleeding from the nose • Sudden unexplained death

As with Myxomatosis there is no specific treatment for RHD so it is essential that you vaccinate your rabbit against it.

A second strain of RHD has also been discovered, called RHD2 which you may be hearing about in the press. Rabbits infected with the RHD2 virus typically DO NOT show the symptoms that are common with the original RHD virus so it is far more difficult to diagnose.

Fatality from RHD2 occurs later and over a longer period of time than RHD. Although RHD2 is less virulent than the original strain of RHD, its difficult early diagnosis actually means it is more challenging given rabbits can carry the disease for a longer period of time without any visible signs of infection.

**You must still vaccinate your rabbit against Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) as well as RHD2.**

This vaccine is not a replacement but in addition to your normal vaccination routine. At present as we are not in a high-risk area for RHD2 we are recommending yearly vaccination against the new strain.

If you are concerned about how best to protect your rabbit or have experienced the sudden death of your rabbit and are concerned, please contact us and we will be able to help.

The combined vaccination against Myxomatosis and Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease RHD1 can be given from 5 weeks of age, with booster vaccinations given annually and it offers the best possible chance of immunity. RHD2 vaccination can be given from 10 weeks of age with a 2 week gap between the combined Myxomatosis and RHD1 vaccine.



## Toxic Plants!

Spring is on its way and along with the sunshine there are some springtime garden hazards for your pets you should be aware of.\*

- **Azalea/Rhododendron: (Rhododendron spp)** Highly poisonous to cats and dogs, even if just a few leaves are eaten.
- **Daffodil: (Narcissus)** All parts of the daffodil are harmful. Dogs sometimes eat the bulbs, but even a small bite can kill a small animal. Even drinking the water in which cut daffodils have stood is potentially hazardous.
- **Geranium: (Pelargonium spp)** All parts of geraniums are poisonous to both dogs and cats. Also present in summer.
- **Hyacinth: (Hyacinthus orientalis)** The bulbs are poisonous to both cats and dogs.
- **Hydrangea: (Hydrangea)** Bulbs are toxic to both cats and dogs as they contain cyanide. Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Iris and gladioli: (Iridaceae)** All parts of these are toxic, but the bulb is most dangerous as it contains a higher concentration of chemicals.
- **Ragwort: (Senecio jacobaea)** All parts of this plant are poisonous, and even small doses can be fatal to cats and dogs. Also present in summer and autumn.
- **Rhubarb: (Rheum)** Rhubarb leaves are poisonous to dogs and cats, whether they are cooked or raw. Also present in summer.
- **Snowdrops: (Galanthus)** While all the plant is toxic, usually the bulbs are most toxic to pets. Also present in winter.
- **Tulip: (Tulipa)** The bulbs are the most toxic, however all parts of the plant can be toxic in large quantities.

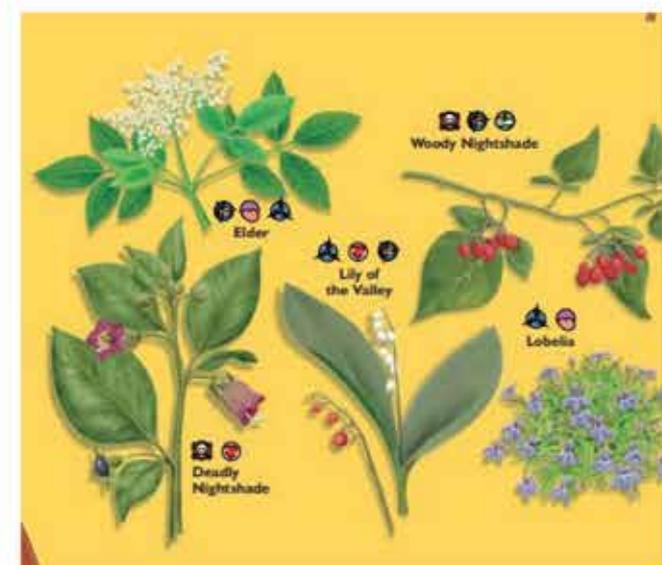
All year round plants which are hazardous

- **Aloe Vera:** Usually kept all year round as a houseplant, it's not overly poisonous to pets but can cause diarrhoea if they consume too much.
- **Cherry laurel: (Prunus laurocerasus)** This hedging plant is often used in gardens and public parks. Be careful how you dispose of hedge cuttings as the most common cause of dogs being poisoned by the plant is from eating or chewing these leaves.
- **Ivy: (Hedera)** Dogs are more likely to eat ivy than cats and it can cause poisoning.
- **Laburnum: (Cytisus alpinus)** All parts of this plant are poisonous, but especially the seeds. Even chewing and spitting out laburnum bark or twigs can affect a dog.
- **Oak: (Quercus pedunculata)** Leaves can be harmful to pets if eaten.
- **Lilies: (Lilium)** All lilies, including Tiger, Easter, Stargazer and Arum, are potentially poisonous, especially to cats. Pets can be poisoned by eating or chewing the leaves, stems or flower heads. Even the pollen can be harmful, as cats may lick this off their fur after brushing against the flower head. Always make sure lilies in the house are kept in a place where your cat cannot access.
- **Philodendron: (Philodendron and related species)** All parts of this ornamental houseplant are poisonous. Commonly, pets might chew or eat the leaves, which can irritate the eyes and mouth causing excessive dribbling. Rarely, swelling due to the irritation can prevent breathing and be fatal.
- **Potato:** The leaves on potatoes can be toxic to cats and dogs. Raw, green or sprouting potatoes can also be harmful.
- **Sago palm: (Cycas revolute)** All parts of this plant are toxic to cats and dogs.
- **Tomato:** Leaves and unripe fruit on tomato plants are toxic to cats and dogs.
- **Yew: (Taxus baccata and related species)** Nearly all parts of the plant are harmful, including dried clippings. Ingesting a small amount of leaves can kill a dog.

Remember your rabbits! Although feeding greens and plants to your rabbit adds variety and interest to their diet it is important to remember that some plants can be very harmful if eaten, causing illness or in some cases death.

The following plants are poisonous to rabbits and should be avoided:-

Carnation, Buttercup, Foxglove, Clematis, Deadly nightshade, Lobelia, Woody nightshade, Elder, Yew, Rhododendron, Privet, Geranium, Ivy, Lily of the Valley, Lupin and Iris.



\*Information taken from PDSA Poisonous plants website article and Supreme Pet Foods.

