

## Feeding garden plants to goats

Feeding garden plants and weeds to your goats can give them some variety and good nutrition. However, you have to be careful, because there are some plants which are poisonous for goats. Your goats will *not* know what is good for them and what is not!

If you feed them something they have never had before, only give them very little on the first day. If they like it and don't have any problem to digest it, you can give them a bit more the next day, and so on. Always cut only as much as you feed them in one day.

Below, we have compiled a list of safe and poisonous garden plants. If you would like to try something not on the "safe" list, feed as described above, but watch them carefully.

Make sure they *always* have something else to eat, which they are used to (e.g. hay, grass or goat pellets), and that they have enough fresh, clean water.

Note: Do not feed plants that have been recently sprayed with insecticides or fungicides, as the residual poison could be harmful to the goats.

### Safe plants:

**Native trees and shrubs**, including Eucalypts (except Manna gum and Sugar gum), all wattle (*Acacia* spp.), sheoak, grevilleas, bottlebrushes.

**Tagasaste** ("tree-lucerne") is an introduced fodder shrub.

**Weeds**: Cape weed, thistles, flat weed, wild radish, dock, sorrel, clover.  
Most are preferred at flowering stage.

**Fruit trees, shrubs and vines**: all Citrus (leaves and fruit), Olive (leaves), Grapevines, Blackberry, Raspberry,

**Vegetables** (all parts of plants): Carrots, parsnips, pumpkins, melons, cucumbers, zucchinis, capsicums, turnips, lettuce, chicory, sweet corn (greens only), cabbage.

### **Poisonous plants:**

Avocado (all parts of plant, including fruit!)

Angels trumpet (*Datura* spp.)

Apricot (leaves and branches)

Azalea

Black bean (*Castanospermum australe*: Seeds and plant)

Castor oil plant (*Rhizinus communis*: Seeds and plant)

Cherry (leaves and branches)

Coral plant (*Jatropha multifida*)

Cycad palms (*Zamia* palms)

Ferns

Lantana

Morning glory (*Ipomea* spp.)

Mother of millions (*Bryophyllum* spp.)

Oleander (*Nerium oleander*)

Peach (leaves and branches)

Pigweed (*Portulaca oleracea*)

Plum (leaves and branches)

Poinsettia (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*)

Potato (All parts of plant, incl. tubers!)

Rhododendrons

Rhubarb

St Johns wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)

Tomato (Leaves and stems. Ripe fruit is ok)

Yellow oleander (*Thevetia peruviana*)

Yew (*Taxus baccata*)

Note: The leaves of apricot, peach, cherry and plum trees contain a substance (HCN) which is converted into highly toxic cyanide in the goats rumen.

In fresh, green leaves, there is not much HCN. If leaves are wilting, or trees are drought-stressed, the amount of HCN rises to a critical level, which can kill a goat within a few minutes of eating the leaves. To be on the safe side, do not feed prunings of these trees to your goats.