FOOD & PLANTS

Is Monstera Toxic to Cats? Swiss Cheese Plant Safety

Yes. Monstera (Swiss cheese plant) is toxic to cats and not cat safe: chewing it irritates the mouth and can cause drooling, vomiting and trouble swallowing. Most animals recover fully, but a swollen throat is an emergency.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed October 30, 2026 • 5 min read • 7 cited sources

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The short answer

Yes, monstera is toxic to cats. The ASPCA lists the monstera plant (Monstera deliciosa) as toxic to cats and dogs, under the name cutleaf philodendron. Like pothos, it holds insoluble calcium oxalates: chewing it irritates the mouth and can cause vomiting.

So monstera is not safe for cats, and no monstera counts as cat safe. The ASPCA names the whole Monstera group among the most common oxalate plants its poison center gets calls about, and a 2023 review in the journal Toxins shows Monstera adansonii holding the same crystals.

Monstera toxicity to cats is more painful than dangerous. The ASPCA rates the severity as low and expects no long-term effects, and Merck's veterinary manual expects most animals to recover fully. The emergency is rare swelling in the throat, which can make breathing hard.

One plant, many names

Monstera goes by more names than most houseplants, and the tag may not say monstera at all. Every name here points to a plant to keep away from your cat.

NAMES ON THE TAG, AND WHAT THEY MEAN

Name on the tag	What it is	For a cat?

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`Monstera, Monstera deliciosa, Swiss cheese plant`	The plant this guide is about	Toxic (ASPCA)
`Cutleaf philodendron`	The name of the ASPCA's entry for Monstera deliciosa	Toxic (ASPCA)
`Hurricane plant, ceriman, Mexican breadfruit, window leaf plant`	Other names for Monstera deliciosa (ASPCA)	Toxic (ASPCA)
`Fruit salad plant`	Merck's name for Monstera deliciosa	Toxic (Merck)
`Split-leaf philodendron`	Monstera deliciosa to the ASPCA, Philodendron bipinnatifidum to Pet Poison Helpline	Toxic either way
`Monstera adansonii, monkey mask`	A related Monstera (Toxins review)	Same crystals
`Mini monstera`	Usually Rhaphidophora tetrasperma, a different plant (Catster)	Treat as toxic

Not sure what you have? Look up the scientific name on the tag in the ASPCA's plant list.

Why chewing a monstera hurts

A monstera's leaves, stems and stalks hold raphides, very small needle-like crystals that protect the plant (ASPCA). They sit in bundles inside cells scattered through the plant, and chewing or crushing a piece bursts those cells (Merck).

The needles then go into the lips, mouth and throat, causing irritation and pain (ASPCA, Pet Poison Helpline). A cat may drool, paw at its face or shake its head within moments. Merck lists the pain as immediate.

The crystals do their harm where they touch. Merck notes that insoluble oxalates, unlike the soluble kind, are no concern for kidney injury, which is why a monstera bite is treated so differently from a bite of a **true lily**.

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: Signs to watch for, If your cat chewed monstera, Easing the mouth, and what the vet may do and 3 more sections, plus the Toxic & Safe Houseplants for Cats Chart. Read it all free when you join our pet health emails at cattcountycatnippers.org/articles/is-monstera-toxic-to-cats

Sources

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