FOOD & PLANTS

Is a Spider Plant Safe for Cats? Yes, and Why Cats Chew It

Yes. The ASPCA lists the spider plant as non-toxic to cats, which makes it one of the easiest houseplants to keep with one. A cat that eats a lot of it may vomit or skip a meal, but no deaths have been reported.

By Catt County Cat Nippers • Reviewed November 1, 2026 • 5 min read • 5 cited sources

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The short answer

Yes. The ASPCA lists the spider plant (Chlorophytum comosum), also called ribbon plant and spider ivy, as non-toxic to cats and dogs. That makes it one of the easiest houseplants to keep with a cat.

Non-toxic is not the same as cat food. Merck's veterinary manual notes that cats which eat spider plant can vomit, drool, retch and go off their food for a while, within hours. It reports no deaths and no diarrhea, and treatment, when it is needed at all, simply eases the signs.

So keep one with a clear conscience, but out of reach of a cat that treats it as a salad bar, for the plant's sake as much as the cat's.

Why cats chew spider plants

Many cats find spider plants hard to resist, and Merck explains how they get to them: the plant is often grown in a hanging basket, and cats reach it by climbing or when the little plantlets fall from its long stems.

Plant eating itself is normal. A University of California, Davis study of cat owners (Hart and colleagues, 2021) found plant eating common in cats, with few cats showing signs of illness beforehand. Only about a quarter to a third of the cats often vomited afterward.

Young cats ate plants more often than older cats and vomited less after it. Short-haired cats ate plants as often as long-haired ones, which argues against the old idea that cats eat plants to bring up hairballs.

The authors see plant eating as inherited. Their hypothesis is that wild ancestors ate plants regularly to help purge intestinal parasites, and house cats kept the habit.

Keeping one with a cat

A spider plant is a good pick for a home with a cat. A few habits keep both of you happy:

- Hang it where no shelf, sill or furniture gives your cat a jump to it, if you want the plant to keep its leaves.
- Pick up fallen plantlets, or pot them up: Merck notes that dropped plantlets are one of the ways cats get at the plant.
- Keep the pot where your cat can't dig in the soil or knock it over.
- Read the label on fertilizers and pest sprays before using them on any plant your cat can reach (see below).
- Keep toxic plants, such as **pothos**, **snake plant** and lilies, out of the same room.

If your cat ate a lot of spider plant

Expect, at worst, a short bout of stomach trouble. Merck lists vomiting, drooling, retching and a brief loss of appetite in cats within hours of eating it, and no diarrhea or deaths.

Call your vet if vomiting carries on, if your cat won't eat, or if it seems weak or unusually quiet. Those are more than a spider plant usually does, and your vet will want to know what else your cat could have got into.

If you are not sure the plant was a spider plant, treat it as unknown and call your vet or a poison line: ASPCA Animal Poison Control, (888) 426-4435, or Pet Poison Helpline, (855) 764-7661. Both answer 24/7; a consultation fee may apply.

This quick sheet is the start of the guide. Still to read: Fertilizers, sprays and potting mix, Cat-safe plants to grow instead, Quick answers, plus the Toxic & Safe Houseplants for Cats Chart. Read it all free when you join our pet health emails at cattcountycatnippers.org/articles/is-spider-plant-safe-for-cats

Sources

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4. Pet Poison Helpline — Fertilizers
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5. ASPCA — Toxic and Non-Toxic Plant List: Cats
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