

# Warning for pet owners

Animal owners across Scotland are being urged to watch out for poisonous plants that could harm their pets.

This summer's fine weather has seen flora flourish across the country – but many plants commonly found in gardens and the countryside can cause serious health problems for animals such as horses and dogs.

Scotland's Chief Veterinary Officer Sheila Voas said:

“Scotland is looking especially verdant this summer but animal owners need to be mindful that such lush and abundant greenery contains hidden dangers. Many plants commonly found in gardens and the Scottish countryside are poisonous to pets and, if eaten, can cause sickness and even death, although thankfully such cases are rare.

“Some of these toxic threats are well known, such as ragwort, yew and foxgloves. But there are also lesser-known risks to look out for including sycamore seeds – which have recently been discovered to be noxious – and hemlock water dropwort, also known as poisonous parsnip, which is particularly profuse this summer.

“It is important that animal owners fully understand these potential perils for their pets and that they are responsible for their animals' wellbeing.

“In very exceptional cases Scottish Ministers can, under the Weeds Act, require landowners to take action to stop some poisonous plants spreading but this is limited to a very small number of specified plants and is deployed only when there is a clear and direct threat, for example to livestock or horses.

“The onus is therefore on animal owners to remain vigilant and take appropriate steps to minimise the risk of pets falling

ill or even dying after accidentally ingesting a poisonous plant and to seek prompt veterinary advice if they suspect their animal may have been poisoned.”