

Convallaria majalis

Common name:

Lily of the Valley

Palatability to Livestock:

Occasionally eaten.

Toxic to Goats:

Moderate risk.

Toxicity to Livestock:

Moderate risk.

Toxic to cattle, sheep, horses, donkeys.

Poisonous Principle:

Cardiac glycosides, notably convallatoxin.

Effects:

Signs and symptoms;

- . Depression,
- . Diarrhoea,
- . Slow irregular heart beat, eventually heart block.
- . In humans, nausea, headache, heart failure.

Health and Production Problems;

- . Rapid death in some cases.
- . Little effect in others, until mustered, when they may drop dead unexpectedly.

Treatment;

- . Do not feed this plant to any livestock.
- . Be aware of potential stock problems.

Integrated Control Strategy:

- . Dig out carefully into disposable bags.
- . Dispose of cuttings carefully.

Comments:

- . Garden plant.
- . A slow growing rhizotomous perennial, with strap-like leaves, about 10 cms long, deeply ribbed to channel water to the roots.
- . Leaves are mid-green, and unequal in size.

- . One-sided sprays of fragrant, pendant, bell-shaped white flowers, in spring.
- . Plant prefers cooler climates.
- . Ruminants, such as the goat, are much more tolerant of this type of plant poison than are horses and donkeys.
- . Reproduces by root division.
- . Floral emblem of Finland.
- . Toxins are very potent in the berries, which are round and red, with many seeds.
- . All parts, particularly the berries, are toxic.



Picture: *Convallaria majalis*

Further Reading:

- . Paterson. Herbs in the Garden. 1985.
- . Shepherd. Pretty but Poisonous. 2004.
- . Wilson. Some Plants are Poisonous. 1997
- . Woodward. Australian Herbal. 1996