

Goat Care Basics

When caring for your a goat you own--or one want to own--here are 15 goat care basic items you need--and 6 plants to avoid.

Goats can be incredibly sweet and impossibly insolent. But no matter how independent and hardy they appear, goats need some basic care and attention. (Check out these 6 toxic plants!)

So if you're thinking of adding goats as companions or as a way to add income to your farm, take some time to learn more about goats and basic goat care.

There's so much more to know, but here's are some basic items you'll need to take good care of your goats:

15 Goat Care Necessities
Quality hay and/or balanced concentrated feed

Feed tubs or mangers

Water containers

Minerals that are goat-specific for your area

Hoof trimmers and styptic powder

Brush

Collar and lead

Shelter, shed or barn

Bedding material

Secure fencing

Goat care and veterinary reference books

First-aid supplies

Dewormer

Syringes, needles, vaccines

Kidding supplies, if needed

6 Toxic Plants

Goats aren't immune to toxins if they ingest too much of the wrong plant.

A good guide to poisonous flora--like *A Guide to Plant Poisoning of Animals in North America*, by Anthony P. Knight and Richard G. Walter--can help you identify the worst offenders.

Here's a quick checklist of six plants to keep out of your goat's eating areas:

1. Rhododendrons/Azaleas: All plant parts contain toxins that can cause vomiting, colic, paralysis and coma.
2. Mountain Laurel: Signs of poisoning include salivation, colic, vomiting and weakness.
3. Water Hemlock: Symptoms of poisoning include teeth grinding, increased salivation and seizures.
4. Poison Hemlock: A lethal dose can bring on respiratory failure in a few hours.

5. Death Camas: Symptoms of poisoning include vomiting, weakness and staggering.

6. Choke Cherry: The toxic seeds, bark and leaves—especially when wilted—can cause breathing difficulty, confusion, convulsions and sudden death.

Excerpted from "Browse Buffet" by Cherie Langlois. Read the full article in Popular Farming Series: Goats.

Excerpted from "Caprine Care" by Cherie Langlois. Read the full article in Popular Farming Series: Goats, a publication with in-depth information for those who own or would like to own goats. Buy one online or call (800) PET-BOOK (738-2665).