

Potential threats to your pets that live in your yard

Pets love to roam free, and homeowners with outdoor space often let their pets get

some exercise and play time in their backyards. While it's important for pets like dogs

and even some cats to get some time outdoors, pet owners should recognize the potential threats to pet health looming in their lawns and gardens.

• **Mulch:** According to the Pet Poison Helpline, mulch made from cocoa beans can pose a threat to pets. This type of mulch is made of discarded hulls or shells of the cocoa bean. These byproducts of chocolate production contain varying concentrations of the toxins theobromine and caffeine. When ingested in high concentrations, these toxins

can cause vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures, and, in some instances, death. The amount of these toxins present in a given batch of this type of mulch may not be readily known, so homeowners should avoid applying it.

• **Slug and snail baits:** The PPH notes that the active ingredient in slug and snail baits is metaldehyde, which is highly poisonous to cats and dogs. Symptoms of distress, including restlessness, vomiting, seizures, and high

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