

TEXAS VET NEWS

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[Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network](#)



Cocoa Bean Mulch Toxicity 5/10/06

With spring time better weather comes and many people are working in their yards and flower beds, and they are using some type of mulch in these areas. A type of mulch that is becoming common in many areas is mulch from cocoa bean shells. Cocoa bean shells are a byproduct of chocolate production and the mulch produced from this product is desirable because it degrades into an organic fertilizer and has an attractive color and odor. However, just like chocolate, this mulch is very toxic to dogs. The dogs also like the taste and smell and will sometimes eat large quantities.

The compound contains theobromine which is the toxic principle and high doses can cause vomiting, a high heart rate, muscle tremors, seizures, and even death. The ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center indicates that death has been documented in several dogs from eating large quantities of cocoa bean mulch and 67% of the dogs affected were in California so this mulch is more popular on the west coast at this time. Treatment of the disease includes calling your vet immediately and inducing vomiting if the intoxication is within 2 hours. The seizures can be controlled with intravenous drugs given by your vet. Also, intravenous fluids will usually be given to prevent dehydration since the dog will not be able to drink during this ordeal. Fortunately, most dogs do not eat enough of the cocoa bean mulch to cause death but many will get very sick and require intensive care treatment. If you have dogs that may have access to your flower beds, I would not recommend using this product. Also, be sure and read the label and check for pet hazards on every product you use around your home before purchasing the product.

Hear the audio of this program at the [Texas Farm Bureau Network](#).

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