

# DEATH CAMAS

## Near animal fatality

Recently, we heard that a local horse owner experienced a near animal fatality due to feeding hay containing Death Camas- *Toxicoscordion venenosum*.

What is Death Camas?

A native plant to western parts of North America, from the lily family that contains a toxic chemical called zygacine. Young plants tend to be more toxic than older plants. It is most often found in dry areas of Western US. The bulb is often confused with edible wild onions – eating one or two bulbs can cause symptoms and all parts of the plant are poisonous. The only practical means of defense are 1) prohibit stock from using heavily infested areas, 2) avoid early turnouts; wait until ample amounts of good forage are available, 3) make sure the hay you're feeding is free of weeds and possible poisonous plants.

The horse owner had been feeding morning & evening while dark and was unaware of the contamination until a young horse became ill. Fortunately, her horse survived. She contacted the local hay grower to alert him of the Death Camas in the hay.



Death Camas that has been removed from a bale of hay.



Death Camas, full plant (lily-like leaves), Mt. Hood in the background.

Do you know where your hay comes from? Don't be afraid to ask if it's "weed-free".

Did you know that Washington State has a "Weed-Free" Hay and Mulch program? Below you will find very valuable information.

**Where can I learn more about WWHAM?**

Please contact the [WSDA Plant Services Program](#) at (360) 902-1984 or at [PlantServices@agr.wa.gov](mailto:PlantServices@agr.wa.gov).

Questions? Call us  
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