

Bad wood - left column

ALDER - **red** alder -see Alder Buckthorn paragraph
ANDROMEDA -Pieris, Lily of the Valley shrub
APRICOT
ARROWHEAD VINE
AUSTRALIAN FLAME TREE
AUSTRALIAN UMBRELLA TREE
AVACADO
AZALEA - Related to Rhododendron
BANE BERRY - Actaea
BEANS -castor, horse, fava, broad, glory, scarlet runner
BLACK LOCUST - Robinia
BOX ELDER
BOXWOOD - Buxus
BUCKTHORN - **Cascara / Alder Buckthorn - see chapter**
BRACKEN FERN
BURDOCK
CACAO
CAMEL BUSH - Trichodesma
CANARY BIRD BUSH - Crotalaria
CANNABIS
CASTOR BEAN
CEDAR - Thuja, Chamaecyparis, Cupressus
CHALICE - trumpet vine
CHERRY **see comments below**
CHINA BERRY TREE - Melia / Texas umbrella tree
CHINESE MAGNOLIA - uncertain for safety
CHINESE POPCORN / TALLOW
CHINESE SNAKE TREE - Laquer plant
COMMON SAGE
CORIANDER - Cilantro
DATURA
DAPHNE - it's the berries
DATURA STRAMONIUM - Brugmansia - angel's trumpet
DIEFFENBACHIA
ELDERBERRY
EUONYMUS - Includes burning bush and more
EUPHORBIA
FELT PLANT - Kalancho baharensis
FLAME TREE
FIRETHORN - Pyracantha
FLAME TREE - Brachychiton / Sterculia
FOXGLOVE - Digitalis (pharmaceutical source)
GOLDEN CHAIN TREE - Laburnum
GROUND CHERRY
CROWN OF THORNS
HEATHS
HEMLOCK - Tsuga
HOLLY - Ilex
HONEY LOCUST - Gleditsia
HORSE CHESTNUT - Aesculus
HUCKLEBERRY - leaves bad: evergreen & deciduous
HYDRANGEA
JASMINE
JUNIPER - Juniperus
KALMIA: also called Mountain Laurel
KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE
LANTANA - red sage
LAUREL - Prunus
LEUCOTHOE

Safe wood - right column

ACACIA - Silk Tree would be in this group
APPLE -
(**Insecticide residue likely cause for periodic issues**)
AILANTHUS - Tree of Heaven
ALDER - **white** alder -
(**See paragraph about Alder / Buckthorn**)
ALMOND
ARALIA - Fatsia japonica
ASH - Fraxinus
ASPEN - Populus
BAMBOO
BARBERRY- Berberis
BIRCH - **see paragraph**
BEECH - Fagus
BOIS D'ARC - horse apple tree
BOTTLE BRUSH
BUTTERFLY BUSH
CAMELLIA
CITRUS -
(**lime, kumquat, grapefruit, orange, lemon**)
CORK -
(not wood from cork oak, but cork)
CORN PLANTS
COTTONWOOD - Populus
CRABAPPLE - Malus
CRAPE MYRTLE -
(not the same as myrtle)
DATE
DOGWOOD - Cornus
DOUGLAS FIR - Pseudotsuga
DRACAENA
ELM - Ulmus
ESCALLONIA
EUCALYPTUS
FIG
FIR - genus Abies
GINKGO
GRAPE VINES
GRAPE PALM
GUAVA
HACKBERRY
HAWTHORN - Crataegus
HIBISCUS
HICKORY
IRONWOOD - apparently toxic leaves
JADE PLANT
KALANCHOE
LARCH - Larix
LILAC - Syringa
MADRONA / MADRONE - Arbutus
MAGNOLIA
MAPLE - Acer - **see Maple Paragraph**
MANZANITA - Arctostaphylos
MESQUITE - remove sharp parts
MIMOSA
MOUNTAIN ASH - Sorbus
MULBERRY - Morus

LUPINE
 MANGO - (fruit okay: not wood or leaves)
 MEXICAN BREADFRUIT
 MOCK ORANGE - Philadelphus
 MONSTERA - big hunker of a house plant
 MOUNTAIN LAUREL - Kalmia latifolia
 MYRTLE - broadleaf evergreen, not crape myrtle
 NECTARINE
 NUTMEG
 OAK - Quercus - all parts / tannins
 MISTLETOE
 OLEANDER
 PEACH
 PEAR - some sources lean toward safe
 PENCILTREE
 PITCH PINE
 PLUM
 PRARIE OAK - safety uncertain
 PRIVET
 RAIN TREE
 RED **MAPLE** - see Maple paragraph
 RED SAGE - Lantana
 REDWOOD - Sequiadendron, Metasequoia, Sequoia
 RHODODENDRON
 RHUBARB
 SAND BOX TREE - sap was used to poison fish
 SOLANUM - Jerusalem cherry or pepino
 SOPHORA - includes Japanese pagoda tree
 SUMAC - **not all sumacs are bad: see paragraphs**
 TOBACCO
 TANSY
 TOMATO
 UMBRELLA TREE
 WALNUT
 WEeping FIG - Ficus benjamina > Ficus elastica safe
 WHITE CEDAR - China
 WITCH HAZEL - Hamamelis
 WISTERIA
 YEW - Taxus

NANDINA -common name is heavenly bamboo
 NORFOLK ISLAND PINE - Araucaria
 NUT TREES - exclude chestnut
 ORANGE - several sources lean toward safe
 OREGON GRAPE - Mahonia
 PALM
 PAPAYA
 PEAR
 PECAN
 PINE - Pinus: **see Pine paragraph below**
 PHOTINIA **see Photinia paragraph below**
 POPLAR - Populus
 PUSSY WILLOW - Salix
 RAPHIOLEPSIS - Indian Hawthorn
 RIBBONWOOD
 ROSE - Rosa
 RUBBER PLANT - Ficus elastica - Weeping Fig in bad column
 RUSSIAN OLIVE
 SASSAFRAS
 SILK TREE
 SPIRAEA
 SPRUCE - Picea
 STAGHORN SUMAC - **see Sumac paragraph**
 STRAWBERRY TREE - Arbutus like Madrone
 SWEET GUM
 SYCAMORE
 THURLOW
 TREE FERN
 VIBURNUM
 VINE MAPLE - Acer
 WEEPING WILLOW - Salix
 WIEGELA
 YUCCA

Also, plants we see wild birds on should not all be considered safe for pet birds. And wood that is bad for a few birds may well be considered bad for all birds - "**All for One, and One for All**" Some difference of opinion was found. Apple for example. Sources like Gillian Willis, say apple is safe: others say it **may be** harmful. I put it in the safe list due to Gillian Willis' expertise and my opinion that insecticide was the culprit. Elm is on safe wood list. But in many cities, elms are are treated. Maybe refrain from elm, because there is an abundance of other wood that is pesticide free. Call the urban forestry department to find out if street canopy is sprayed. If your yard is maintained by a company, ask if any products are applied.

Ailanthus altissima / Tree-of-Heaven (or "of Hell" due to invasiveness), China Sumac Also called the Ghetto Palm. The following was posted on the Perdue University website about, and seemed worth sharing the comment: Source: James A. Duke. 1983. Handbook of Energy Crops. unpublished.

"Leaves are toxic to domestic animals (Perry, 1980). Gardeners who fell the tree may suffer rashes. Mitchell and Rook's observations are more violent than my own to sniffing the leaves, "The odour of the foliage is intensely disagreeable and can cause headache and nausea...rhinitis and conjunctivitis...The pollen can cause hay fever." (Mitchell and Rook, 1979)."

This caught my attention when this species became a topic of discussion on a arboricultural forum. The article just points out leaf toxicity. And for the present, I will leave it in the wood safe column. There is a fairly lengthy [Wikipedia Topic](#) for this species. The potential for rash appears anecdotal. One Canadian government information system site wrote " However, convincing documentation ... lacking". Little seems more than "may have"

Lumber wood information Pressure injected wood: don't use it for birds: perches, toys or structures. Also, if you find lumber, do you know what contacted it? It's like an unbroken chain of possession for evidence. If you left lumber in a shed that several people use and haven't been there for a year, how do you know what may have spilled? What kind of dust settled? Most light pine lumber in stores is not coated with anything. But ask anyway. Pre-cut stakes, such as those used for surveying, may have been coated due to the need to remain in the ground. We can't be certain 100% of the time, but every piece of information brings us nearer 100% accuracy. A square edge perch is not a good. You could remove square edges, and round wood is better. Natural branches are the best because the diameter differs from small to large, allowing birds feet to stretch and contract.



Aromatic Substances Refer to other bird sites for aromatic info. But I'm leaving this comment about Teflon. Switch from Teflon pans to something like stainless steel or cast iron. Teflon pans over-heating, can emit substances deadly to birds. We try to keep perfume, aromatic scents and colognes to an absolute minimum at our home.

Check Plant Names For our lists, or others, check common names to know the genus, scientific name and common name. For example, Douglas fir is not a fir. Western cedar is not a cedar.

Balsa Wood This is our birds favorite to play with. Most sources indicate that balsa is safe for birds. I contacted avian veterinarians in Oregon and California, and got the same feedback - that balsa wood is fine. You won't want balsa for a perch. A cockatiel can chew through balsa in minutes.

Cleaning Wood One philosophy says clean bird perch wood before it's used by soaking for an hour or two in tub of water with a cap of household bleach. Then rinse the wood in clean water. Another says Chlorine bleach may cause an occasional sickness or fatality. Maybe due to too strong of a solution. The second philosophy may use mild soap and water solution followed by rinsing with clean water. Both viewpoints agree about allowing wood to dry thoroughly, including exposed to direct sunlight. Oven drying needs to be hot enough to kill microbes, but cool enough to avoid combustion.

Alder is not Alder Buckthorn - The 2 alders One person emailed a concern about a substance **Cascara sagrada** acting as laxative. Its made from bark of **Buckthorn** with a common name Alder Buckthorn. Its not an Alder or Alnus. Buckthorn is **Rhamnus purshiana**. To my knowledge, Alnus has no Cascara sagrada. **Red Alder** On a USDA Forest Service Pacific NW lumber page, was a footnote for red alder "**Toxicity: can cause dermatitis**". Red alder is not the only alder we have in Oregon. There is also Alnus rhombifolia called white alder. A source about white alder for use by Ohlone Indians, said they used it for diarrhea. My conclusion: avoid Re Alder.

Note: January, 1, 2010, I read from Univ. of B.C. that Rhamnus purshiana is now called Frangula purshiana. Apparently something that has gone back and forth previously in the past couple of centuries.

Birch The following comments are a **PARAPHRASE** from Gillian Willis - author - with clarification:

Birch is Betula species. LEAVES & BARK contain salicylates and a few substances The low concentration ... Birch should be considered safe for natural wood perches.

The seeds inside the cones are a special goodie safe for birds to eat. (end of paraphrase) Think: Automobile fumes can be damaging. We don't want to be enclosed where the fumes are trapped. But walking down the street where those fumes are in the air at low concentrations, we feel safe to breath. As noted, Birch should be considered safe and the risk of leaving bark is inconsequential.

Cherry Some sources debate about cherry wood being bad to pet birds, for a lack of substantial confirmed cases - although confirmed cases of problems for a few dogs and horses is apparent. Some folks lean toward using cherry wood, but not the bark, under the premise that the chemicals are primarily in the cambium - layer under the bark. Do you know what that layer is? Do you see what I'm getting at here? When there are an abundance of sure safe woods, why use one that has bark with potential bad stuff in it? Suppose there are no confirmed cases of dead birds from cherry. If cherry turns out to be a subtle problem, would you want your bird to be the first confirmed case? I suspect there are cases not documented. There must be hundreds of birds dying each year due to real causes that we don't know about.

Driftwood Driftwood is not recommended for a few reasons: 1. There is no certainty for the average person about the tree genus. 2. The ocean water environment contains organisms not to mention every kind of animal waste in addition to residue from ships. It is an uncertain environment. 3. Driftwood can have high salt content. Imagine all the crud that embeds into that wood.

Larch or Dawn Redwood - Larch is in the safe wood list. In case you did not know it, Larch is a deciduous conifer. It loses its needles in winter. The needles are attached in little clusters on pegs like little tufts. There is another tree **Dawn Redwood** which is also a deciduous conifer. Its needles are attached to the twigs individually and somewhat

two-ranked on either side of the twig. Initially, new spring growth looks like little tufts, but these elongate into tiny mini-twigs lined with ranks of individual needles. Dawn Redwood is not on the list above. It's genus is *Metasequoia* (sp. *glyptostrobooides*). Avoid using Dawn Redwood - feel free to use limbs from Larch (*Larix*).

Maple Originally, this page only listed two maple trees: vine maple as safe, and red maple as potentially harmful. I've included "maple" in the safe list now, but with this condition: **remove the bark**. It may not be absolutely necessary, but it's the only way that I'll suggest most of that tree genus. From what I've read, the bark of many maple trees, like vine maple or Japanese maple, etc., is fine. Meaning, the bark in itself is not deemed a problem. But red maple (*Acer rubrum*) **can** harbor a fungus. Inhalation of exuded residue may be harmful. Maple wood - in general - should be safe for natural wood bird perches once bark is removed. One source wrote that "red maple" is bad for horses, not really specifying why. Currently, I'd use almost any maple branch for a bird toy or perch..

Pine We read an **article** about Pine and Cedar containing compounds that can cause lung or sinus problems. But the article was about **bedding** like shavings put in bottoms of animal cages; more common for hamsters and other pets; rarely for parrots or cockatiels. When we listed pine above, that meant as perch wood which this page is geared for. Also be certain that the pine for bird perches is dry pine that aged for as much as a year or two. Otherwise the pitch in the pine will be an awful thing for bird feathers.

Photinia In May 2010, someone told me that Photinia leaves have Arsenic in them, and was toxic to **horses**. The only reference I could find online was a New Zealand Alpaca site with a table listing Photinia leaves as toxic with Arsenic. But no other references. Then I found a website of a **Manes and Tails** Organization, which included excerpts from **The Merck Veterinarian Manual: Poisonous Range Plants of Temperate North America**. The notes stated: Cyanogenic glycosides in **foliage** and fruits, hydrolyzed in GI tract to free cyanide, thereby affecting cellular respiration.

Keep in mind that the reference was about foliage on a grazing animal website. and that my page here deals with woods or branches expected to be free of leaves, fruit or flowers. Just the branches. So I still believe that Photinia wood is fine for bird perches. I was still glad to find the information though.

Sumac - Rhus One sumac on this page is Staghorn Sumac - a safe tree. And the genus is *Rhus*. Its fruit berries have been clean washed and made into a good lemonade when sweetened. Native American Indians even mixed its leaves and fruit with tobacco for smoking. A broad range of plants may be **called** sumac, some safe, some not. Some species in the genus *Rhus* are potent and can also cause severe skin irritation to some people. Other species like *Rhus typhina* are not bad. Most naughty species have axillary panicles and smooth fruits. The okay species have upright, dense, conical drupe type fruits, covered with crimson hairs.