

INQUISITR

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Second-Hand Smoke: Are Your Plants Passive Smokers?

image: <http://cdn.inquisitr.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/smoking1-665x385.jpg>



As if smokers don't go through enough of a guilt-trip, research has shown that your plants can become passive smokers and suffer nicotine poisoning too.

Polite smokers, who head out into the garden or onto their balcony to enjoy a smoke, might be doing their plants a disservice while keeping their families and friends safe from being passive smokers themselves.

Springer quotes the report in the journal [Agronomy for Sustainable Development](#) as saying this passive form of smoking, along with contaminated soil, could be the reason for high levels of nicotine found in various herbal teas, medicinal plants, and spices.

According to lead researcher Dirk Selmar from the Technical University of Braunschweig in Germany, they used peppermint plants in various mulching and fumigation experiments to test the uptake of nicotine in the plants. Selmar found that the peppermint plants can take in high concentrations of nicotine from contaminated soils.

While previously this might have been caused by the use of nicotine as a pesticide, this usage was banned five years ago in Europe due to its toxicity. However, despite this ban, a large number of food crops and plant-derived products still contain high levels of nicotine, and it seems smokers may be to blame.

And it's not just the fact that the plants become passive smokers. The carelessly-tossed butts are having a bad effect too. Researchers analyzed plants that had been mulched and fumigated with tobacco smoke for over nine days, and they also tested soil contaminated with nicotine as a result of discarded cigarette butts.

Selmar said their analysis showed nicotine concentrations several times higher than the maximum residue levels allowed by European authorities.

“Our results suggest that the widespread occurrence of nicotine in medicinal, spice and food plants may, at least in part, be due to other nicotine sources apart from the illegal use of insecticides.”

According to *IOL*, Dr. Yusuf Saloojee of the National Council Against Smoking in Johannesburg is angry at the findings. Saloojee said that in South Africa alone there are around 60 million cigarette butts tossed every day.

“Who knows what impact they have on the environment and ecosystem for instance? We don’t know yet, but there are worrying implications.

“Some studies have found that even the lowest levels of nicotine on pregnant women cause birth effects.

“What about the impact these cigarettes butts have on the environment?”

One plus side of the research showed that the nicotine concentration decreased as time went by. Researchers think that the nicotine was absorbed by the roots of the plants and then processed in their leaves. However, it is not a good thing for plants to become passive smokers along the way.

While it’s probably best to give up the habit completely, smokers should be aware of the effect they are having on their surroundings, not only with the second-hand smoke floating around, but the potentially devastating effect of their cigarette butts on the environment.

On the subject of smoking, the *Inquisitr* recently reported on how a 4D ultrasound study showed that even unborn babies can be passive smokers and that they physically grimace when their mothers smoke. Yet another reason to stub out that cigarette.

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Read more at <http://www.inquisitr.com/2024067/second-hand-smoke-are-your-plants-passive-smokers/#RRSxXgTczpJaXTrt.99>