


Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, Poison Sumac



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Yes, this IS a photo of poison ivy.

Use right arrow > to move forward and left arrow < to go back.
You can also enter the number of any slide and click enter.

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There are 5 Plants in the Group:



Poison Ivy
Western Poison Ivy
Eastern Poison Ivy


Poison Oak
Pacific Poison Oak
Atlantic Poison Oak

Poison Sumac

Goal: to educate about all forms of these plants and to clear up some of the confusions.

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A Disclaimer:




Few people agree on much of anything about these 5 plants.

From what they look like, to where they grow, to how to treat the rash, talking about these plants can be like talking about religion or politics.

All the information in this presentation is based on my observation and the various books on the subject.

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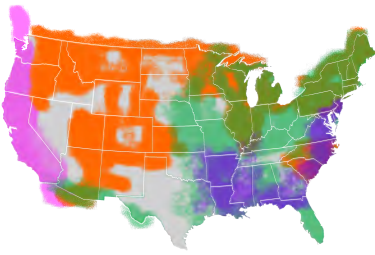
Outline:



- Where they grow
- How to recognize them
- How to get rid of the plants
- How people get it the rash
- What about immunity?
- What does the rash look like?
- If you have touched it
- If you have the rash

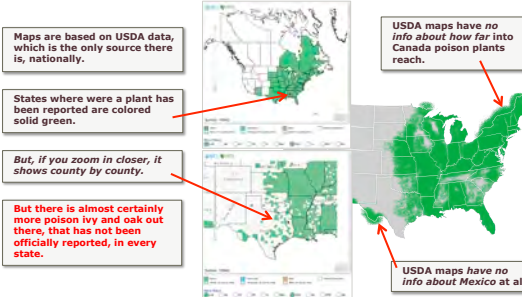
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What Grows Where?



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About the Maps



Maps are based on USDA data, which is the only source there is, nationally.

States where a plant has been reported are colored solid green.

But, if you zoom in closer, it shows county by county.

But there is almost certainly more poison ivy and oak out there, that has not been officially reported, in every state.

USDA maps have no info about how far into Canada poison plants reach.

USDA maps have no info about Mexico at all.

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Eastern Poison Ivy

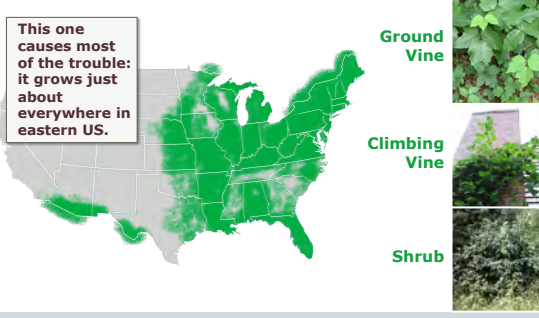
Toxicodendron radicans

This one causes most of the trouble: it grows just about everywhere in eastern US.

Ground Vine

Climbing Vine

Shrub



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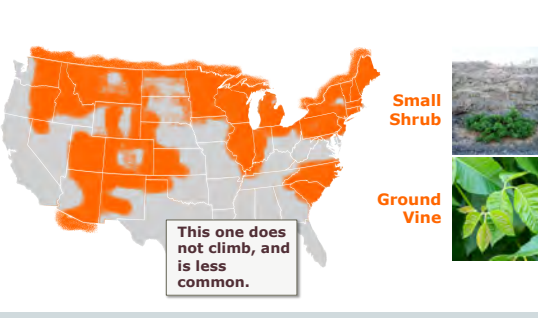
Western Poison Ivy

Toxicodendron rydbergii

This one does not climb, and is less common.

Small Shrub

Ground Vine



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Pacific Poison Oak

Toxicodendron diversilobum

This one is a really big problem in California.

Shrub

Ground Vine

Climbing Vine



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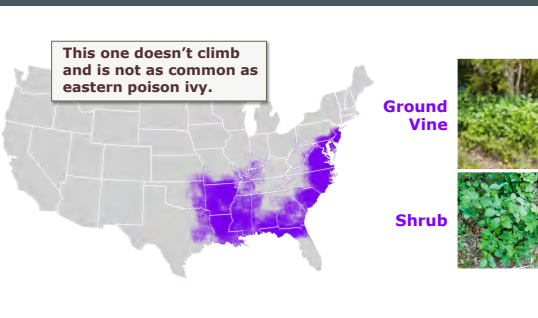
Atlantic Poison Oak

Toxicodendron pubescens

This one doesn't climb and is not as common as eastern poison ivy.

Ground Vine

Shrub



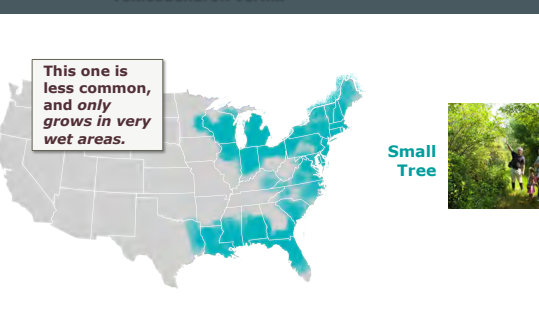
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Poison Sumac

Toxicodendron vernix

This one is less common, and only grows in very wet areas.

Small Tree



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Confusion #1

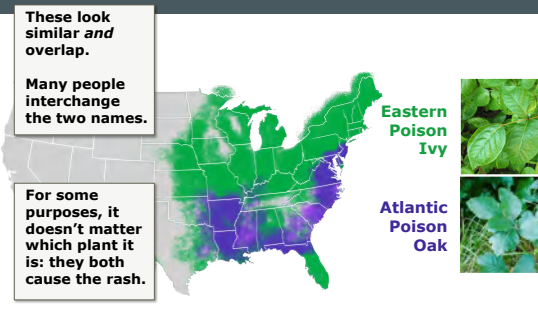
These look similar and overlap.

Many people interchange the two names.

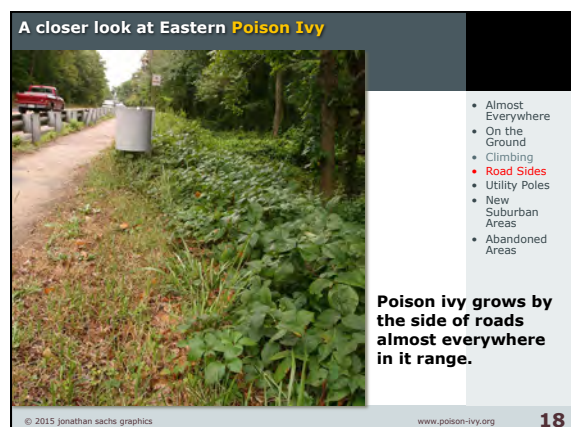
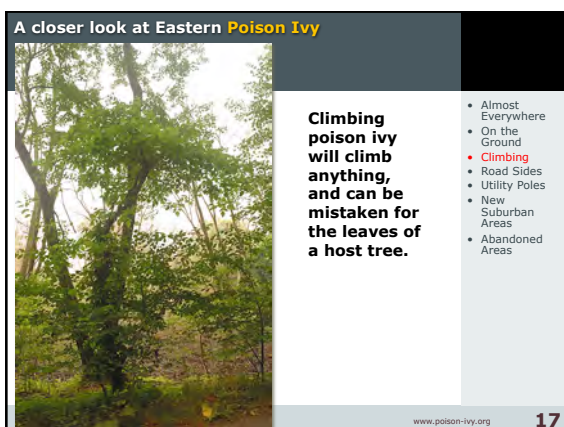
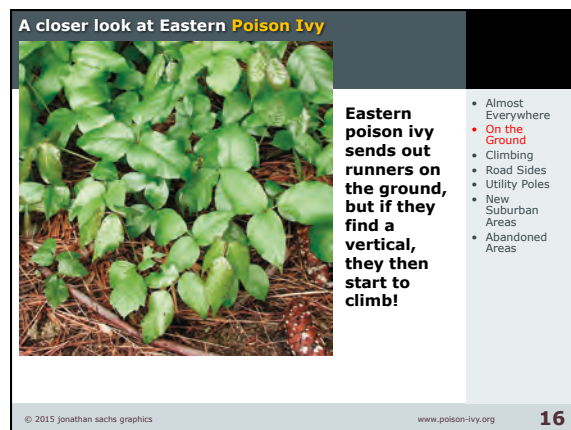
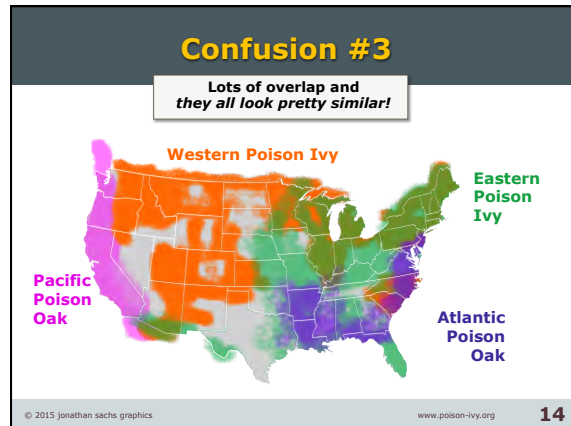
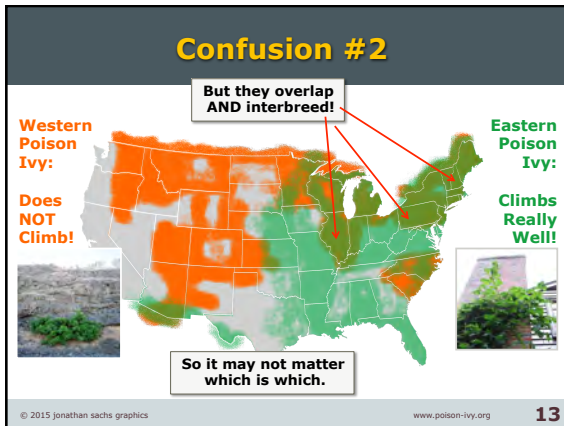
For some purposes, it doesn't matter which plant it is: they both cause the rash.

Eastern Poison Ivy


Atlantic Poison Oak



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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



It tends to grow on utility poles because birds eat the seeds and drop them where they perch.

- Almost Everywhere
- On the Ground
- Climbing
- Road Sides
- **Utility Poles**
- New Suburban Areas
- Abandoned Areas

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




Poison ivy grows well in subdivisions. It grows poorly in deep dark forests, but as soon as the bulldozers leave, it thrives in the sunlight.

- Almost Everywhere
- On the Ground
- Climbing
- Road Sides
- Utility Poles
- **New Suburban Areas**
- Abandoned Areas

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Where it grows

- Almost Everywhere
- On the Ground
- Climbing
- Road Sides
- Utility Poles
- New Suburban Areas
- **Abandoned Areas**

Poison ivy takes over quickly after people abandon land and buildings.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



This gas meter is surrounded by three types of ivy - one of which will ruin your summer..

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**

Always / Never 1

Always has leaves in groups of three, the leaves have a wide range of sizes.

Never has more than 3, never an extra pair

Always has leaf groups growing alternating left and right.

Never has leaf groups growing opposite.

- **Always / Never**
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**

Always / Never 2

Never has thorns of any kind, anywhere.


Never has neat, even tiny, saw-tooth leaf edges.

Never has neat, even scalloped leaf edges.

- **Always / Never**
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

Always has leaves in groups of three; the leaves have a wide range of sizes.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

Leaves can be shiny or not shiny.
Leaves can have notches or not.

Note that these examples of leaves with and without notches, shiny and not all are growing on the same plant. Yes, this is a devious, sneaky plant.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

Some spring leaves are bright red, but others are green.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

In summer tiny flowers may appear, which are hard to see.
Flowers turn to green berries which are usually easy to spot; only female plants have flowers and berries!

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

Fall poison ivy can have pretty fall colors; Often the first plant to turn.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

In winter thick vines can have a hairy look, thinner vines are smooth. The winter sap still contains the urushiol oil that causes the rash.

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




Ground vines in winter are almost impossible to recognize.

This poison ivy patch was identified only from visits during the summer.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- **Winter**
- What is NOT poison ivy
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Virginia Creeper is commonly mistaken for poison ivy.


Creeper has leaves in groups of 5, poison ivy has leaves in groups of 3.

Both plants often grow side by side.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- **What is NOT poison ivy**
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




Blackberry - when it doesn't have berries - looks like poison ivy.

But it has thorns and sawtooth leaves - which poison ivy never has.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- **What is NOT poison ivy**
- Great Infestations

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**

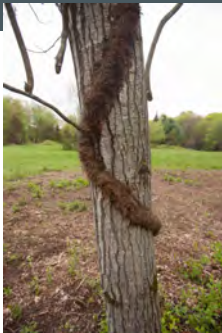


Poison ivy "explodes" at the top of a tree, looking for the next place to climb.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**




Thick vine. Some have reached 6 inches in diameter, and over a hundred feet tall.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Taking over sound barrier on highway.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Utility pole by the roadside.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



50 yard band of poison ivy at ocean edge.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Common urban infestation

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Growing on wall of apartment building.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Utility pole and surrounding area overcome with poison ivy.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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A closer look at Eastern **Poison Ivy**



Barn consumed with poison ivy.

- Always / Never
- Three leaves
- Notched? Shiny?
- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter
- What is NOT poison ivy
- **Great Infestations**

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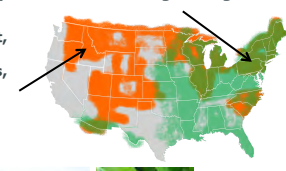
42



A closer look at Western Poison Ivy
Toxicodendron rydbergii

The nasty little brother.

In the east, you can't separate Western from Eastern poison ivy: *they look the same and grow together.*

But in the west, where only Western grows, the main feature: *it doesn't climb.*



Small Shrub  **Ground Vine** 

- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy

**Always / Never Again:
Same as Eastern Poison Ivy**

Always has leaves in groups of three.  **Never** has more than 3, 

Always has leaf groups growing alternating.  **Never** has leaf groups growing opposite. 

Never has thorns.  **Never** has saw-tooth leaf edges.  **Never** has scalloped leaf edges. 

- Always / Never
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy




In the west, water is scarce. So western poison ivy will grow where there is water, or even a bit more moisture.

(Seen here next to Palouse River, above Palouse Falls in Washington State.)

- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy




This western poison ivy, growing near a stream, looks identical to eastern poison ivy.


- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy



Western poison ivy growing on the shady, wetter side of a railroad way.




Western poison ivy growing low along a trail, below other plants.


- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy



Western poison ivy can have just a few flowers and berries...




...or massive bunches.

- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- Versus Holly

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A closer look at Western Poison Ivy



- Near water or moisture
- Berries
- **Versus Holly**

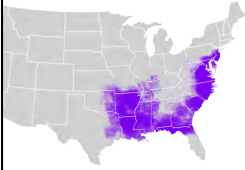
Here, a holly plant grows with western poison ivy: it has blue berries and thorny spikes on its leaves.

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A closer look at Atlantic Poison Oak
Toxicodendron pubescens

Another nasty little brother


This poison oak can also look a lot like eastern poison ivy, but doesn't climb.



Ground Vine



Shrub




- Always / Never
- With cactus
- Oak-shape vs not
- Fuzzy berries

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A closer look at Atlantic Poison Oak


Always / Never Again: Same as Eastern Poison Ivy

Always has leaves in groups of three.




Never has more than 3,


Always has leaf groups growing alternating.




Never has leaf groups growing opposite.




Never has thorns.



Never has saw-tooth leaf edges.




Never has scalloped leaf edges.



- Always / Never
- With cactus
- Oak-shape vs not
- Fuzzy berries

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A closer look at Atlantic Poison Oak




- Always / Never
- **With cactus**
- Oak-shape vs not
- Fuzzy berries

This Atlantic poison oak was growing in a dry, sandy area in New Jersey; notice it grew along with cactus!

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A closer look at Atlantic Poison Oak




- Always / Never
- With cactus
- **Oak-shape vs not**
- Fuzzy berries

Here Atlantic poison oak has both oak-shaped leaves and leaves that look just like eastern poison ivy.

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A closer look at Atlantic Poison Oak



- Always / Never
- With cactus
- Oak-shape vs not
- **Fuzzy berries**


Atlantic poison ivy berries:

They are fuzzy; no other member of this family has fuzz on the berries.


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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak


This is a **BIG** problem in California




Shrub



Ground Vine



Climbing Vine




- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns


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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak
Toxicodendron diversilobum


Almost Always has leaves in groups of three.




Never has more than 3,




Always has leaf groups growing alternating.




Never has leaf groups growing opposite.




Never has thorns.



Never has saw-tooth leaf edges.




Never has scalloped leaf edges.



- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak




- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

As a ground vine and small shrub along a path.

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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak





Pacific poison oak as a ground vine, red in the fall, next to green oak seeding.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

Pacific poison oak creeping across a trail.

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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak

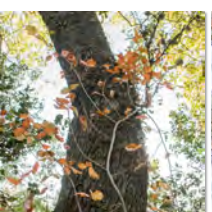
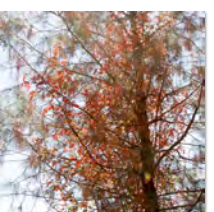


- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

Pacific poison oak climbs, but without the extensive hairy roots: it wraps around trees and poles to climb.

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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak


Pacific poison oak climbing a tree.

Pacific poison climbing inside a pine tree.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**



- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- **Shrub**
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

Pacific poison oak growing as large shrub, 12 feet tall.

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**




Pacific poison oak growing on the hills by San Francisco Bay.

Just like Eastern Poison Ivy, it grows small, curvy leaves near salt water.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- **Near Salt Water**
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**




There are huge variations in leaf shape.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- **Leaf shape variations**
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**




This entire area is all poison oak.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- **Large infestation**
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**




The berries are looser, less bunched than poison ivy.

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- **Berries**
- Occasional extra leaves
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific **Poison Oak**




Pacific poison oak does occasionally have an extra pair of leaves, beyond the "leaves of three".

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- **Occasional extra leaves**
- No thorns

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A closer look at Pacific Poison Oak



Poison oak

Different plant that has thorns: poison oak never has thorns!

- Always / Never
- Trailside
- Ground vine
- Climbing
- Shrub
- Near Salt Water
- Leaf shape variations
- Large infestation
- Berries
- Occasional extra leaves
- **No thorns**

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A closer look at Poison Sumac
Toxicodendron vernix

Grows only in very wet areas. But there can be quite bit once you find it.




Small Tree



- **Small tree**
- Wetland
- Young Growth
- Details
- Other sumacs

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A closer look at Poison Sumac

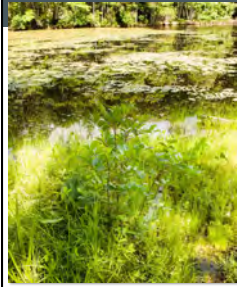



- Small tree
- **Wetland**
- Young Growth
- Details
- Other sumacs

Poison sumac growing with roots in very wet soil.

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A closer look at Poison Sumac






- Small tree
- Wetland
- **Young Growth**
- Details
- Other sumacs

Young poison sumac tree growing in a wetland. **Young leaves.**

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A closer look at Poison Sumac

- Small tree
- Wetland
- Young Growth
- **Details**
- Other sumacs



Poison sumac details:

- **Red stems**
- **Loose growing fruit**
- **Smooth leaf edges**

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A closer look at Poison Sumac

Two kinds of sumac that are NOT poison sumac:

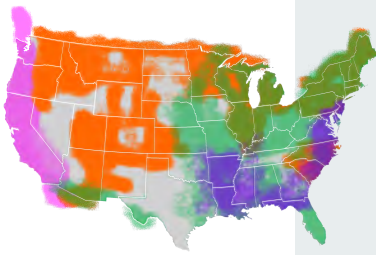



- Small tree
- Wetland
- Young Growth
- Details
- **Other sumacs**

Staghorn sumac: very common **Winged sumac: less common**

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**



Methods for getting rid of the plant are the same for all five plant.

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**




- Tear it out - with great care!
- Cut it to the ground, repeatedly
- Spray it with herbicide - with great care!

This little curbside patch would be easy to dig with a shovel and bury in a plastic bag. It's rarely this easy.

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**




Tearing it out with gloves:

- you can catch a bad rash
- throw away the gloves
- you may have to tear it out again, since it is tenacious

- Tear it out - with great care!
- Cut it to the ground, repeatedly
- Spray it with herbicide - with great care!

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**




- Tear it out - with great care!
- Cut it to the ground, repeatedly
- Spray it with herbicide - with great care!

Cutting it off at the base will eventually kill it.

This works well for a few vines; it's not practical for a whole field.

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**



- Tear it out - with great care!
- Cut it to the ground, repeatedly
- Spray it with herbicide - with great care!

Herbicide does work, but you can kill useful plants, and all poisons have to be used with great care.

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How to **Get Rid of the Plants**



Special extra method!


Goats can eat poison ivy and oak with no ill effects.

This has to be the most ecological way to control poison ivy, if not always the most practical.

- Tear it out - with great care!
- Cut it to the ground, repeatedly
- Spray it with herbicide - with great care!
- Get a goat!

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**




She wouldn't agree, but this young lady got a very mild case.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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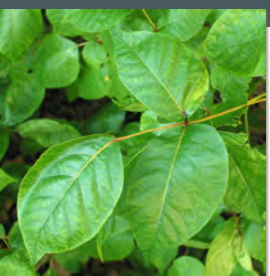
**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**



The rash from all five plants seems to be the same, though some people have said that Pacific poison oak is stronger than Eastern poison ivy.

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**



Plants sap contains an oil called urushiol (ur-ROO-she-all)

Some people are allergic to this oil.


People can both gain and lose their allergy.

Other animals do not seem to be affected by it.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**

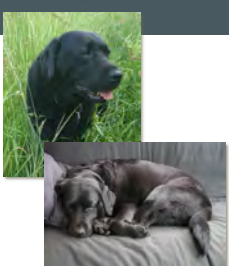


The most common way to get the rash is to touch the plant. For example, retrieving a ball lost in the weeds.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**



Many people get the rash from touching a cat or dog that has been in poison ivy.

If you touch the plant and touch someone else you can give them the rash.


If you rub your eyes you spread the rash to your eyes.

Your pet can also transfer urushiol oil from their fur to your couch, or to you.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**



Clothing or a tool that has the oil on it can transfer it to you.

Furniture or a car seat can also transfer the oil to bare arms and legs.


Care wiping with alcohol can remove oil from tools.

Repeated washing may remove it from clothes.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**




Never eat the plant.
There are stories that you can become immune by eating the plant.
Any exposure might give you immunity over time, but eating it can kill you.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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**How you get the
Poison Ivy / Poison Oak / Poison Sumac Skin Rash**




Do *not* burn the plant.
The smoke can cause serious reactions.
Poison oak or poison ivy smoke can be a major hazard for firefighters.

- Urushiol oil and allergy
- Touching the leaves and stems
- From a pet or a person
- From clothes or tools
- Eating the plant
- Breathing the smoke

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What about immunity?




The fact that the rash is an allergic reaction is not well known.

- First exposure sets up the reaction
- 30% of people seem to be immune
- Exposure tends to increase immunity over time
- Some people are "exquisitely sensitive"

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What about immunity?

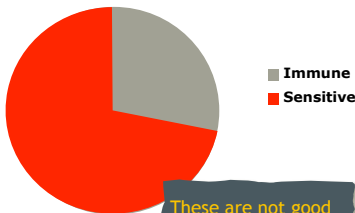


The allergy requires a *first* exposure that *doesn't* cause a rash.
The body then builds up antibodies, and the next exposure can cause a full reaction.

- First exposure sets up reaction
- 30% of people seem to be immune
- Exposure tends to increase immunity over time
- Some people are "exquisitely sensitive"

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What about immunity?



■ Immune
■ Sensitive

These are not good odds to gamble on.

- First exposure sets up reaction
- 30% of people seem to be immune
- Exposure tends to increase immunity over time
- Some people are "exquisitely sensitive"

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What about immunity?



Some people find that small exposures produce immunity over time.
But, immunity can come and go over time. People who think they are immune often get a terrible surprise.

- First exposure sets up reaction
- 30% of people seem to be immune
- Exposure may increase immunity over time
- Some people are "exquisitely sensitive"

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What about immunity?



Some people are so sensitive to urushiol that they can't eat cashew nuts, which are a distant relative of poison ivy.

There are also Japanese lacquers that contain tiny amounts of urushiol. These general don't cause trouble, except if the lacquer is used for a toilet seat cover.

Immunity

- First exposure sets up reaction
- 30% of people seem to be immune
- Exposure may increase immunity over time
- Exquisite sensitivity

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91

What about the rash itself?



Lots of things will give you a red rash. But nothing seems to itch like poison ivy. It makes mosquito bites seem like fun by comparison.

- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing I ever went through"

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92

What about the rash itself?



- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing I ever went through"

The rash may show as small red areas, looking and feeling like mosquito bites. It may end there, or continue to intensify...

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93

What about the rash itself?



The rash develops raised spots and continues to itch.

(You can't spread the rash to other people once the oil is absorbed into the skin.)

- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing I ever went through"

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94

What about the rash itself?



The infamous blisters that may arise are filled mostly with water.

The fluid will not spread the rash.



- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing I ever went through"

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95

What about the rash itself?



Poison ivy is VERY itchy. It will drive you completely nuts. It is worth a lot of effort to avoid getting the rash.

- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing I ever went through"

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96

What about the rash itself?



- Red area
- Raised spots
- Large blisters
- The most itchy feeling you may ever have
- "The worst thing..."

Many people describe their bouts with poison ivy as the "worst experience of their life", particularly when it covers the whole body.

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97

What if you touch the plant?



Remember: the skin on your hands is thick, so the oil may not penetrate.

But if you rub the thin skin on your face, and elsewhere, the oil can get right in.

- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower right away
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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98

What if you touch the plant?



- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

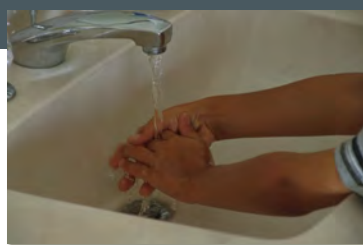
Most sources indicate that the urushiol oil is absorbed in as little as 30 minutes. It is absorbed faster in hot weather, and faster if your skin is wet and sweaty.

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99

What if you touch the plant?



Rinse with cold water, such as a garden hose, a stream or a sink. Cold water can wash away the oil before it gets absorbed.

- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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100

What if you touch the plant?



- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

Don't wash with hot water. The heat will open your pores and let the urushiol penetrate more easily.

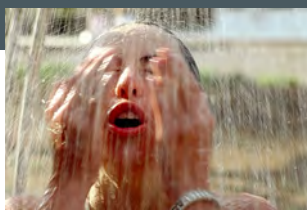
Opinions differ on use of soap. Some say it helps, others say it removes the natural oils that may protect your skin.

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101

What if you touch the plant?



If you take a shower with hot water and soap, you can turn a mild case into a full body disaster requiring hospitalization.

First thoroughly rinse the area that you think has the oil on it with a hose or under a faucet. Shower after you remove the oil.

- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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What if you touch the plant?



Alcohol can dissolve urushiol, so it can be used to clean skin, pets, tools, and furniture.

But as you wipe off the oil, you can spread it, so you must wear gloves and dispose of your wiping rags carefully - bury them if possible.

- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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103

What if you touch the plant?



Technu can remove the oil right after exposure.

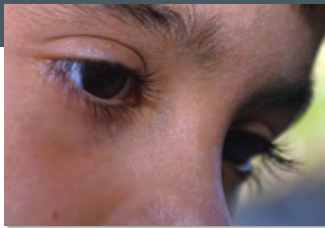
- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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104

What if you touch the plant?



Don't touch your eyes or other tender body parts. The urushiol oil is much more able to penetrate sensitive areas (which is why you don't get the rash as much on the heel of your hand).

- You may only have 30 minutes
- Rinse with lots of cold water
- Not hot water
- Don't shower
- Alcohol can remove the oil
- Technu can remove the oil
- Don't touch your eyes

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105

What if you get the rash?



Scratching is bad because it can open your skin and cause infection and leave scars.
But it is difficult to resist scratching.

- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold water vs hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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106

What if you get the rash?



Call your doctor if you are worried. A serious case of poison ivy can require hospitalization.

- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold water, hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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107

What if you get the rash?



Even if the case is mild, if it is near or in your eyes: SEE A DOCTOR!

This is "during" and "after" photo of a woman who had poison ivy on her face.

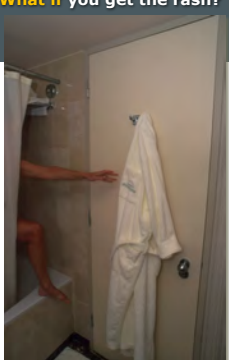
- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold water, hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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108

What if you get the rash?



Some people find relief from the itch with cold showers - others with hot showers.

Safe application of heat seems to ease the itching for a few hours.

- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold water, hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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What if you get the rash?



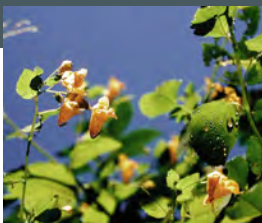
For mild cases, over the counter remedies may reduced the itch.

Talk to your pharmacist - for minor cases.

- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold showers, hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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What if you get the rash?



A poultice made from ground up jewelweed is a well known alternative remedy for poison ivy.

There are many alternative remedies that people swear by.

Of course, none have been scientifically confirmed. So you are on your own.


- If it is at all serious see a doctor
- Be wary of the eyes
- Cold showers, hot showers
- For minor cases see your pharmacist for remedies
- Alternative remedies

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QUIZ!

Here is a short quiz to check your knowledge.

For example, is there poison ivy in this picture, and if so, where?



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QUIZ!

Poison ivy



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Question 1

Is this bush poison ivy?




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← Question 1 →

Is this bush poison ivy?

YES!

Given enough light poison ivy will form a shrub - this one is over six feet high.




Here it is in the winter.

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← Question 2 →

Which of these two plants is poison ivy?




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← Question 2 →

Poison ivy

Virginia creeper




These two vines often grow in the same place.

Virginia creeper is totally harmless.

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← Question 3 →

What plants do we have here?




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← Question 3 →

Jack in the Pulpit

Poison ivy



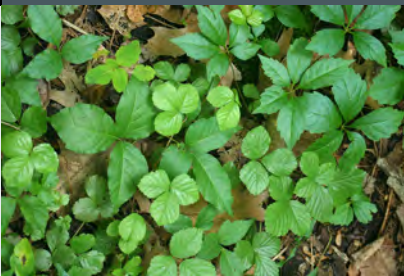
Not every plant with three leaves is poison ivy.

Jack in the pulpit is innocent!

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← Question 4 →

Is there poison ivy here, and if so where, exactly?



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← Question 4 →

Only these are Poison ivy →

Jewelweed Boston Ivy Virginia Creeper




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← Question 5 →

What plant is this?

(All the leaves in the foreground are the same plant)




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← Question 5 →

This is all Virginia creeper

For some reason, the youngest sets of leaves are only in 3s, just like poison ivy.

The key is to look down the vine and see that the older leaves are in 5s.




Yes, it is not fair that a harmless plant looks identical to poison ivy at times.

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← Question 6 →

Is this poison ivy?




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← Question 6 →

It's beach Poison ivy →

This is poison ivy growing at the beach.


For some reason poison ivy grows curly, waxy, and yellow at salt water beaches.



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← Question 7 →

Where is the poison ivy in this picture?




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← Question 7 →

The poison ivy wants to join the party, along with other harmless types.

Snipping the poison ivy off at the ground will prevent it from taking over the whole wall.


Poison ivy



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← Question 8 →

Is the poison ivy just the little red leaf in the center?




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← Question 8 →

Only the lobed leaves in the background are not poison ivy. They are a young oak tree.

Poison ivy




Oak tree seedlings

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← Question 7 →

Is this poison ivy?




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← Question 7 →

Notice that it comes up in three neat stalks, all branching from the same point.

Poison ivy grows with alternating branches.

Poison ivy




Not poison ivy

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← Question 8 →

Well?




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← Question 8 →

All poison ivy except for three plants

Not poison ivy




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← Question 9 →

Next time they come by to mark the trail they better be careful.

Are all of the vines poison ivy?




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← Question 9 →

95% poison ivy


grape vine



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← Question 10 →

Can you get the rash by touching someone else's rash?




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← Question 10 →

No.


Once the oil has been absorbed the rash will not spread to others.



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← Question 11 →

Can you get the rash from just being near the plant on a hot summer day?




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← Question 11 →

No.


Many people believe that they got the rash just from oil in the summer air, but it doesn't travel in the air unless it burns.



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← Question 12 →


If you were in California, what problem plant would you see here?



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← Question 12 →

There is only Pacific Poison Oak in California, but there is a great deal of it.



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← Question 13 →

Is this poison sumac?




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← Question 13 →

No for two reasons:

1. Poison sumac leaf edges are not saw-toothed.
2. Poison sumac berries hang down, don't stand up




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← Question 14 →

No for two reasons:

1. Poison sumac leaf edges are not saw-toothed.
2. Poison sumac berries hang down, don't stand up




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Bonus Question

Remember this gas meter?

Which ivy is the poison ivy?




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Bonus Question

poison ivy

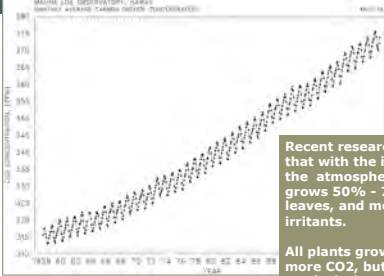
Virginia creeper

English Ivy



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News: more potent poison ivy.



Recent research* has shown that with the increase in CO2 in the atmosphere, poison ivy grows 50% - 75% larger leaves, and more potent irritants.

All plants grow stronger with more CO2, but poison ivy is particularly good at using it.

*Research done at Duke University

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Visit www.poison-ivy.org to learn more, read real life poison ivy encounters, and buy more educational items.

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