

## Avoiding Poison Ivy

One of the poisonous hazards that homeowners often deal with this time of year is poison ivy. Some individuals are lucky and never seem to get it, but others can be 10 feet away from it and still end up with it.

The best way to avoid the irritation is by learning how to properly identify poison ivy. There are two different forms of poison ivy found in Indiana. They include a low-growing shrub and a climbing vine. Aerial rootlets allow the vine to attach to other items including your fence, trees, house, or other tall items around your property. Poison ivy leaves are compound with three leaflets attached to the petiole. When looking at the trifoliolate leaf, the two opposite leaflets will have little to no petiole, while the terminal leaflet has a long petiole. The leaves have smooth, scalloped, or irregular toothed margins. Poison ivy may have leaves that appear to be oily and contain greenish-white berries that grow in clusters. When looking at the trifoliolate leaf, the two opposite leaflets will have little to no petiole, while the terminal leaflet has a long petiole.

There are a number of vining plants which poison ivy is often confused with. Some of those include: fragrant sumac and Virginia creeper. Fragrant sumac does have three leaflets but is different from poison ivy. The main difference is that the fruit and leaves of fragrant sumac will be hairy. Virginia creeper on the other hand has five leaflets. Neither, fragrant sumac or Virginia creeper contains a toxic substance that irritates the skin like found in poison ivy.

Once you identify any poison ivy on your property, it is time to control it. To control it, you can cut the plant back to the ground or dig it up. When digging it out, try to get every last part of the root system since any part that is left will allow the plant to resprout. When doing either of those methods, you stand a chance to come in contact with the poison ivy and end up with irritation. Do not burn it, because the smoke it produces can cause irritation.

Using herbicides to control poison ivy is the method most homeowners gravitate towards. If possible, when applying the herbicide try to cut a small segment of the poison ivy and apply the herbicide directly into the open wound. When choosing a herbicide, look for one that contains amino triazole, glyphosate, or dicamba. Make sure before using any herbicide, you pay close attention to the label. You should follow all directions on the label on how to dress when handling the herbicide, application method, and all safety instructions.

Visit our homepage at [www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam](http://www.extension.purdue.edu/putnam) or you can contact the local Purdue Extension Office by calling 765.653.8411 for more information regarding this week's column topic or to RSVP for upcoming events. It is always best to call first to assure items are ready when you arrive and to RSVP for programs. While many publications are free, some do have a fee. Purdue University is an equal access/equal opportunity institution. All times listed are Eastern Time.

Upcoming Events:

June 1 State Fair 4-H Entry Deadline

June 2 FAMACHA Workshop, Fairgrounds, 6:00 pm

June 3 Nuisance Wildlife and Insects, Library, 6:00 pm

June 5 First Friday, Downtown Greencastle, 5:00 pm

June 8 Exploring 4-H Meeting, Fairgrounds, 6:30 pm

June 9 Gardening with Children, Library, 12:00 pm

June 16 Vegetable Gardening, Library, 12:00 pm