

POISONOUS PLANTS

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO AVOID POISONOUS PLANTS



Poison Ivy



Poison Oak



Poison Sumac

Leaves of Three- Let them be!

Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac- All three contain an oil-urushiol that transfers to anything that it touches- including other people, animals, tools and other work equipment. The oil can stay on skin for several days and stay on other surfaces for years if they are not decontaminated. Sweating and warm weather can accelerate symptoms.

Skin contact is not the only way that workers can be exposed to the irritant. An inhalation hazard occurs when these plants are burned or become airborne during weed whacking or mowing.

Symptoms may include a rash that appears 12-48 hours after contact, itching, swelling and blistering. Some may have an even more severe allergic reaction.

Giant Hog Weed grows in fields and alongside trails and roadways. It can grow up to 10-15 feet with long, hollow stalks and flowers May-July. Contact can cause severe skin irritation and blindness. It can easily be mistaken for Queen Anne's Lace, however if seen, it is best to have it checked out by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.



Giant Hog Weed



Wild Parsnip

Wild Parsnip grows in large patches or as scattered plants along roadsides, in abandoned fields, on pastures, on restored prairies, and in disturbed open areas. The plant toxin called psoralens, is in the sap and reacts with sunlight. It is called Phyto-photo-dermatitis. It can cause a stinging burning sensation and skin redness similar to a sunburn.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING/TREATING EXPOSURES

- If possible, stay on trails and roads instead of wandering/hiking through areas where they may grow.
- Use plant identification applications to help identify the poisonous plants and ones that look similar but are not poisonous.
- Wear long sleeves, pants, socks and boots if there is potential to come in contact. Also wear disposable gloves.
- Do not burn poison ivy, oak or sumac.
- If you must remove these plants, wear eye, face and respiratory protection. Also wear disposable gloves.
- Clean all equipment with alcohol or dish soap after contact.

If Contact Occurs:

- Wash immediately with soap and water, preferable a degreaser such as dish soap or specific plant oil degreaser.
- Rinse frequently so that the oil is fully removed.
- Scratching can cause further irritation and infection—seek itch relief such as anti-itch lotions, oatmeal baths and antihistamines.
- In severe cases, seek medical attention.

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