



Civil Air Patrol Safety

Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac

How to Recognize and Treat Poison Ivy, Oak and Sumac





Overview

Many people are allergic to these plants, the oil produced by these plants can cause a rash. Poison Ivy and its cousins grow in almost all parts of the USA, and in many other countries.


- Poison Sumac grows primarily in wet areas in the eastern half of the country.
- Poison Oak, which looks similar to Poison Ivy and tends to grow in dry, sandy areas in the Southeast.
- Poison Ivy has two forms: Eastern and Western.
 - Western Poison Ivy is a ground vine only, the plants overlap and are hard to tell apart.
 - Eastern Poison Ivy can grow on the ground, climb trees and walls, and even appear to be a shrub.



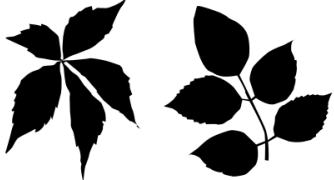


Examples of Poison Ivy and Poison Oak


Poison Ivy ALWAYS has LEAVES of THREE




NEVER HAS MORE




Poison Ivy ALWAYS GROWS LEFT THEN RIGHT



NEVER SIDE BY SIDE




NEVER HAS THORNS



of any kind

NEVER HAS EDGES LIKE THESE



saw-toothed **scalloped**

www.poison-ivy.org

Atlantic Poison Oak ALWAYS has LEAVES of THREE



NEVER HAS MORE



Atlantic Poison Oak ALWAYS GROWS LEFT THEN RIGHT



NEVER SIDE BY SIDE



NEVER HAS THORNS



of any kind

NEVER HAS EDGES LIKE THESE



saw-toothed **evenly scalloped**

www.poison-ivy.org





A Picture of Poison Sumac



Poison Sumac





A Picture of Poison Ivy



Poison Ivy





Another Picture of Poison Ivy



Poison Ivy





Preventing the Rash

- FIRST: Avoid contact if possible.
- If you suspect you have been in contact with poison ivy, immediately wash the exposed skin with soap and warm water, or use TECNU, this must be done within 2 hours to be effective.
- Wash clothing (standard laundry soap will disperse the oil) and your tools. The oil can remain on clothing and tools for months.
- The rash is NOT CONTAGIOUS, you can't get it from someone else.
- AVOID burning poison ivy, the smoke can carry the oil.





Treating the Poison Ivy Rash

You can manage mild to moderate poison ivy at home.

- Cool compresses can be soothing
- Heat (hot shower or hair dryer) will cause the rash to itch intensely for a short time but may eliminate the itch for up to 8 hours.
- Calamine lotion helps with oozing areas

The rash usually lasts 7 – 14 days.





Treating Severe Poison Ivy

- If you develop a severe rash, consider seeking medical assistance.
A course of an oral steroid (like Prednisone or Decadron) can allow the rash to resolve more quickly. Don't discontinue the steroid too early (at least 7 days) or the rash could recur.
- Topical steroid creams can be helpful and some are over the counter.





Thank You!

