

The Poison "Urushiol" Pronounced "yoo-ROO-she-ol"

Urushiol is the allergen found on poison ivy, oak, and sumac. It is an oily substance found **on all parts of the plants at all times of the year!**

Urushiol oil can stay active on dead plants, clothing, or objects for **one to five years!** If you believe an object has come in contact with any of these plants, be sure to wash it properly before using or touching it again!

The oil **can be transferred to your body and face** from your clothing, pets, gardening or camping tools, furniture, or from direct contact with any part of the plant causing an allergic reaction in most people

Contact Dermatitis

The skin condition caused from exposure with any object (plant or otherwise) containing the oil urushiol

Some people do not react when in contact with the plants. However, at any time someone who 'was not allergic' to poison ivy/oak/sumac may suddenly become 'allergic' to it, and vice versa. **Prolonged exposure does not make you immune!**

Causes a localized irritation that ranges from a rash, itching, burning skin, swelling or blistering. Symptoms can be mild or severe and may last days to weeks. Severe cases or exposure to sensitive areas (especially eyes) need to **seek medical attention immediately!**

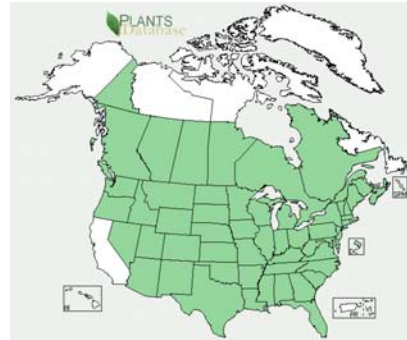
Burning the plants are VERY dangerous!! The urushiol can be inhaled and cause respiratory failure or death

Treatment

Try a cool water compress with a cloth or add baking soda and/or oatmeal to the cloth. Anti-itch solutions can be purchased at most pharmacies.

DO NOT rub your eyes if you came in contact with these plants (your eyes could swell shut!)

United States and Canada



Poison Ivy



Poison Sumac



Poison Oak

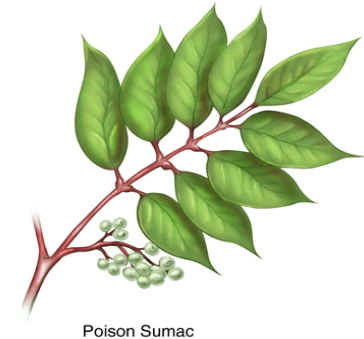
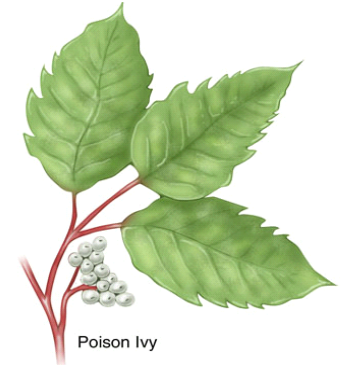
Present
 Not Present



Shiawassee National Wildlife Refuge

Poisonous Plants

Poison Ivy, Sumac, and Oak



Poison Ivy

Leaves of three, Leave it be!!

- ◇ One leaf centered on longer stalk, and two leaves to each side attached to the stalk
- ◇ Leaves are rounded, jagged, serrated, or lobed (see picture)



◇ Newer leaves are red, turn green in the summer, then red or yellow in autumn



- ◇ Grows on ground (as ground cover or bush) or can grow as a long, hairy vine climbing up trees

Poison Ivy can grow as a hairy vine



Flowers of poison ivy

- ◇ The berries (DRUPES) are smooth (compared to poison oak, which is velvety)
- ◇ Only the stem can be seen in the winter
- ◇ Grows in open woods, forests, rocky areas, and fields

**** ALL PARTS OF THE PLANT ARE POISONOUS AT ALL TIMES OF THE YEAR!!**

Poison Oak

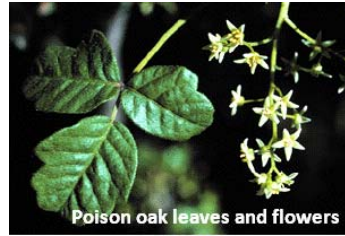
Not common in Michigan

- ◇ Looks like poison ivy but with 3 lobed leaves



- ◇ Differs from poison ivy because it has velvety stems and berries (drupes)
- ◇ Drupes and flowers look similar to poison ivy

- ◇ Grows on ground in clearings, forests, or fields



Poison oak leaves and flowers



Poison oak drupes (above) are velvety while poison ivy drupes (right) are smooth



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Poison Sumac

Not very common

- ◇ Woody shrub or tree that can grow 5 to 20 feet (1.5 to 7 m) tall with 7 to 9 (sometimes up to 15) leaflets per stem



- ◇ Leaflets are oblong and pointed at the end and 2 to 4 inches long, connecting to the stem



- ◇ Center leaf at end of stem and side leaves connect opposite each other
- ◇ Stem (rachis) is red and hairless, but older stems may be grey or brown

- ◇ Leaves may be smooth or slightly velvety

- ◇ Fruits are nearly spherical and flattened

- ◇ Grows in acidic forests or very wet, flooded soils, (especially swamps, marshes and peat bogs) and will root itself in the water, killing other trees in the area



The white ripe fruits (right) can survive winter

**** ALL PARTS OF THE PLANT ARE POISONOUS AT ALL TIMES OF THE YEAR!!**