

# 100 “SAFE DAYS” of Summer

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**PLEASE DO NO TOUCH!**

## **POISON IVY**



**Poison Ivy** is the name commonly applied to several species of the sumac family of plants – poison ivy, poison oak, western poison oak and poison sumac. Native to the warmer regions of North America, these plants produce oil within their leaves, flowers, bark and fruits that can cause a rash on human skin known as dermatitis.

Poison ivy is usually found in wooded areas, along fences, walls or around trees and poles. The leaves of the plant are dark green and contain three oval-shaped leaflets. These leaves may be smooth, jagged or rounded and have an oily appearance. Once mature, these plants bear small, waxy, dull white berries. In the fall the leaves turn scarlet in color.

Exposure to tools used in poison ivy prone areas, such as machetes and axes, or direct contact with the plant usually results in a rash. The rash can occur within a few hours or within several days after exposure. Symptoms of the rash are red skin, blisters and itching. As these symptoms progress, body swelling and fever may result.

### **PREVENTION METHODS**

- **AVOID CONTACT.** The best method to prevent a rash is to avoid direct contact with poison ivy. This can be accomplished by wearing long sleeve shirts and gloves when working in poison ivy prone areas.
- **USE BARRIER CREAM.** If working in poison ivy prone areas, apply barrier cream. This should be done before beginning work and after each hand washing. Using this cream will help minimize the risk of exposure.

