

KNOW Before You GO

POISON ivy

What is Poison Ivy?

Poison ivy (and its cousins poison oak & poison sumac) is a plant that can cause a red, itchy, and highly uncomfortable rash when its oil, urushiol, touches your skin. You can get the oil on you from the leaves the vine and the sticks—even in winter!



Spring

Summer

What is it good for?

While we may run from it, poison ivy's berries are a preferred food for woodpeckers, warblers and other birds. It is also a favorite food among deer, black bears, muskrats and rabbits, who eat the fruit, stems and leaves.

Prepare Yourself

- “*Leaves of three, let them be*” Know what poison ivy looks like to avoid touching it AND walking through it
- Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts, socks, and fully-enclosed shoes if walking in suspect areas.
- Apply a barrier cream, like Ivy Block or Stokogard.

How to Identify Poison Ivy

Knowing what poison ivy looks like & where it is found the first step towards avoiding it:

1. Poison Ivy generally grows in a cluster of low, weed-like plants or woody vines that climb up trees layering the trunk in glorious green.
2. Edges of leaves are generally smooth or have tiny "teeth." Color changes based on the season -- reddish in spring; green in summer; yellow, orange, or red in autumn. Berries are typically white.
3. In our area of CT, it grows EVERYWHERE!

I've got it. Now what?

Most rashes can be treated at home. Follow these steps immediately after exposure or to relieve symptoms:

- Wash contact area with **cold** water
- Treat exposed clothing with care as oils can linger days afterward. Make sure to wash thoroughly using a detergent that removes oil.
- Relieve symptoms with cool baths, compresses, non-prescription antihistamines or calamine lotion.
- Natural Remedies - use jewelweed (found throughout the grounds) to wash areas touched by poison ivy and also use it as a compress.

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Ticks

What are ticks?

Ticks are arachnids, like spiders and mites, and are commonly found in moist or humid environments near wooded or grassy areas.



Deer Tick

Dog Tick

What purpose do ticks serve?

Ticks are a favorite food source for chickens, turkeys and other ground birds like grouse.

A strong and important link in the food chain, ticks take nourishment from larger host animals high in the food chain and transfer that down to lesser organisms.

Be Prepared and Stay Alert

- Wear light-colored clothing so ticks can be spotted easily.
- Know where ticks are found and use caution when walking through tall grasses.
- Apply a bug repellent—many are designed specifically for ticks.
- Perform a Tick Check daily

Performing a Tick Check

The best way to find a tick on you is through touch. Check the following areas thoroughly:

- Armpits
- In and around ears
- Belly button
- Back of knees
- In your hair
- Between your legs
- Around the waist

How to Remove a Tick

If you find a tick on you—don't freak out (and don't use a lighted match)! Using tweezers, carefully remove the tick from as close to the skin as possible to ensure that you get the head. Once it's off, save it! Take the bug to your local Health Department to test for diseases. Lyme & other tick-borne diseases are fairly easily cured with antibiotics if caught early.

Remember: Ticks cannot jump onto you! They're most likely to hitch a ride as you walk past them dangling off a twig or blade of grass.

Lyme Disease

Not all ticks carry Lyme, but proper care should be taken if you suspect you may have contracted the disease. Visit our website for more information on symptoms and treatment..

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WASPS & Hornets

What are wasps?

Wasps are flying insects closely related to bees and can be either social or solitary insects. The wasps we see most often, yellowjackets are often confused with bees. In fact, those familiar black and yellow stripes are brighter on wasps than they are on bees!



Paper Wasp Nest



Typical under-eaves nest

What good do they do?

Well, they're a gardener's best friend! Great pest-eaters, they feed on the flies & caterpillars that attack other plants. And as natural scavengers, wasps help keep habitats clean by feeding on dead animals and insects.

What to Do? Stay Alert... Also Calm

- Avoid wasps by steering clear of nests.
- Keep an eye out for concentrations of wasps, which could mean that there's a nest nearby
- Stay calm and don't swat. Unless it senses a threat, no wasp, hornet or bee is likely to sting.

I've been stung. Now what?

- Remove any stingers remaining in the skin with tweezers or the edge of a credit card.
- Apply an ice pack to help reduce pain and swelling.
- For a natural remedy, use Common Plantain (weed in any yard) as a poultice. Baking soda works well, too.

Most insect stings require no additional medical care*, but do watch for any unusual swelling, especially if not directly around the sting.

* Allergic reactions may require prompt medical treatment.

Myth-busters

Despite their reputation, wasps are not innately aggressive and sting only when they sense a threat. Most stings happen in late summer, when higher nest-populations make them more protective of their homes.

And as for hornets, the term "hornet" is really just a name for certain larger types of wasp.