



MORIN-HEIGHTS
1855

INFORMATION ABOUT POISON IVY

PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT. ACT RESPONSIBLY.



DESCRIPTION

Poison ivy is a shrub-like plant. A climbing form also exists in southwestern Quebec.

Poison ivy grows from 20 cm to 1 metre (8 inches to 3 feet) in height. This perennial plant spreads by seeds or by its extensive underground network of stems.

Poison ivy is found throughout Quebec. It grows in a wide range of environments:

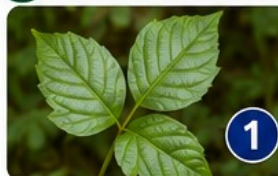
- In forests or open fields;
- In sunny or shaded areas;
- In dry or moist soils.

It is most commonly found:

- At the edge of woods;
- Along fences, roads, cliffs, shorelines and railways.



HOW TO IDENTIFY POISON IVY



1

LEAVES:

Poison ivy leaves are shiny. Each leaf has 3 pointed leaflets (small leaves). The stem of the middle leaflet is much longer than the stems of the other two leaflets. (See image 1)



2

FLOWERS:

In June and July, poison ivy produces clusters of cream-colored flowers. (See image 2)



3

FRUITS:

Round, waxy berries appear in September. They grow in clusters and range in color from green to yellow. (See image 3)



HOW TO LIMIT THE PRESENCE OF POISON IVY ON YOUR PROPERTY

Since poison ivy can have harmful effects on your health, it is important to prevent it from growing and spreading.

Before removing poison ivy, you should carefully identify the plant and protect yourself to avoid allergic reactions if your skin comes into contact with the plant's sap.

If you need to handle poison ivy, protect yourself:



Always wear waterproof gloves made of rubber or nitrile.



Wear long clothing to prevent any contact between your skin and the plant's sap.



Even dead poison ivy plants can cause an allergic reaction. Handle them carefully.



HOW TO PREVENT POISON IVY FROM GROWING

To control poison ivy, you must prevent it from spreading by destroying its roots and stems.

You can do the following:

PULL OUT POISON IVY:

- For effective results, pull out the entire plant, including the roots and underground stems.
- Pull out the plants in the spring, once the leaves are fully open and while the soil is still moist. Pulling is more effective at this time.

PREVENT POISON IVY FROM GROWING:

- Cultivate the soil frequently to destroy young plants before they develop an extensive root system.
- In the spring, smother new growth by covering it with mulch (preferably a thick black plastic). Keep the mulch in place all summer long, and even for more than one year.
- Bury dead plants at least 30 cm (12 inches) deep. You can also place them in a heavy-duty garbage bag and tie it tightly. Clearly label the bag to inform and protect anyone who may handle it. Dispose of the bag with household waste.
- Do not compost the plants.
- Do not use herbicides or chemical control methods. These are solutions to consider only as a last resort.
- If you plan to use chemical control methods, seek advice from an expert or a specialized company. This will help you avoid harm to your health or the environment.



Never burn poison ivy plants. Breathing smoke from burning poison ivy can have very serious consequences. It can cause extremely painful lung inflammation and severe respiratory problems that can be fatal.



AFTER HANDLING

Poison ivy sap can remain on clothing and tools for a long time and still cause a reaction. After handling poison ivy, be sure to wash everything that may have come into contact with the sap, including your shoes and shoelaces.



Wash any clothing that may have come into contact with the sap separately from other clothing. Wash them in hot water with soap. You may need to wash contaminated clothing several times to remove all sap.



Always wear rubber or nitrile gloves when handling objects that may be contaminated with sap.



Wash your skin thoroughly with plenty of soap and water.



Clean tools and equipment that have come into contact with the plant with hot, soapy water.



ALLERGIC REACTIONS CAUSED BY POISON IVY

Contact with poison ivy sap can cause a painful allergic reaction called "contact dermatitis" or "Rhus dermatitis".



The substance responsible for this allergic reaction is urushiol, a substance found in the plant's sap. The sap is present in all parts of the plant, except the pollen.



It is estimated that 9 out of 10 people are sensitive to poison ivy sap. These people can react even to very small amounts of urushiol.

SYMPTOMS:

Symptoms of an allergic reaction to poison ivy usually appear 24 to 48 hours after skin contact with the plant's sap.

The first sign of a reaction is intense itching along with redness at the contact area.

Later, lesions may develop:

- Inflammation;
- Swelling;
- Blisters;
- Crusting when blisters burst and ooze.



Call Info-Santé 811 for more information on what to do in case of contact with poison ivy sap.



LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT AND OUR HEALTH.

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Sources: 1. <https://www.quebec.ca/en/housing-and-housing/healthy-living-environment/recognition-and-removal-poison-ivy#c3965>
2. <http://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/allergies-caused-poison-ivy>