

Your Yard

Get Rid Of Poison Ivy Fast

(NAPS)—Poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac—they're the kinds of weed you don't want anywhere around your kids or pets. The weeds contain an oil called urushiol that can cause an itchy red rash with bumps or blisters. The symptoms can develop within hours after exposure and last up to three weeks.

You can get the oil on your skin by:

- Touching the poison ivy plant or any clothing or shoes that have come in contact with the plant;
- Touching any pets or gardening tools that might have urushiol on them;
- Burning poison ivy. The oil from the plant is carried in the smoke and can cause lung irritation.

Identification is the key to avoiding exposure. The old saying "Leaves of three, let it be!" is a helpful reminder for identifying poison ivy and oak, but not poison sumac, which usually has clusters of seven to 13 leaves.

The Food and Drug Administration says poison ivy, oak and sumac are most dangerous in the spring and summer, when there is plenty of sap, the urushiol content is high and the plants are easily bruised.

"But the danger doesn't disappear over the winter," says Bayer Advanced garden expert Lance Walheim, author of "Lawn Care for Dummies." "Dormant plants can still cause reactions."



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Bayer Advanced™ Brush Killer Plus (bayeradvanced.com) kills poison ivy, oak, sumac and even kudzu—more than 75 tough weeds in all. The systemic herbicide enters weeds through their leaves or roots and then moves through the plant. You'll see wilting and yellowing in one to six weeks. Always read and follow label directions.

The American Academy of Dermatology suggests you wear long pants and long sleeves, gloves and boots whenever you're going to be around poison ivy. The American Academy of Family Physicians says if a rash starts to develop, there are several over-the-counter medications you can use to relieve the itching, including hydrocortisone creams, calamine lotion, antihistamine tablets and even oatmeal baths.