

# Martin Dies, Jr. State Park

## All About: Poison Ivy

### **What does poison ivy look like?**

Poison ivy typically has 3 leaves that meet on a single red stem. When ripe, the berry is white.

### **“Leaves of 3, let it be”**

The central leaf is symmetrical from the mid-vein line, whereas the outside leaves are mirror images.

The vine has an extremely large amount of hair, allowing it to cling tightly.

### **“If it’s hairy, it’s scary!”**

The leaves, stem, vine, hairs, seeds, and roots all contain urushiol (pronounced yr-oo-shee-aal), an oil that can cause a rash.

### **How do I treat the rash?**

As soon as you realize you’ve come in contact with poison ivy, flush the area with large amounts of cold water and soap. The oil usually takes up to 5 to 15 minutes to bond with your skin, and can be effectively rinsed (but not rubbed) off. If there’s no water, rubbing alcohol can remove it. If a rash forms, very warm water seems to relieve itching and aid in drying out blisters. The park store sells products that are meant to reduce itchiness.



Poison ivy

## Do we have poison oak and poison sumac here?

Yes, but they're very rare and difficult to find. Poison oak has 3 leaves similar to poison ivy, but the leaf is rounded. Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaves. Poison oak berries are green and sumac go from green to white as they mature.



Poison sumac



Poison oak

## Is this poison ivy?

No, this is peppervine. This vine creates a small round hard berry resembling a peppercorn. The berries are dark blue to black and are poisonous.

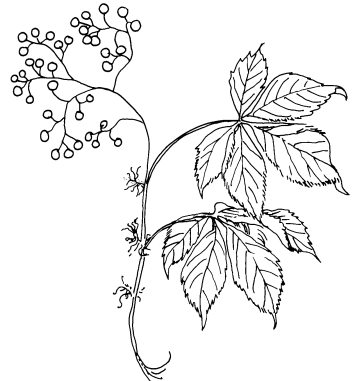


Peppervine

Paul Nelson

## Is this poison ivy?

No, this is Virginia creeper. This 5-leaf vine occasionally grows among poison ivy and may contain traces of the rash-producing oil. It has dark blue berries.



Virginia creeper

## I have poison ivy at my house. How can I get rid of it?

Wearing two layers of disposal gloves, place vines in trash bag, and dispose of them. Take a cold shower immediately after, and wash clothes as soon as possible. Remember to remove oil from shoes.

**Never burn poison ivy as this allows smoke to spread oil through the air.**