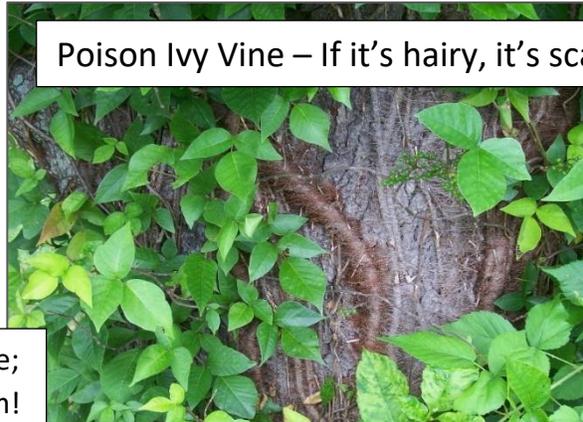


School-to-Nature



Poison Ivy – leaves of three; but look at the center stem!



Poison Ivy Vine – If it's hairy, it's scary

Poison Ivy

Poison Ivy's THREE leaves cluster on slender stems. The stem has a large leaf **set away** at the end of the stem with two slightly smaller leaves on the sides. Leaves may be jagged or rounded. The plant forms tiny greenish-white flowers that become greenish berries in late summer. Poison Ivy can grow in shade or sunlight, so it is found in many wild locations outdoors, including on Conservancy lands.



There is an old saying that is very true: “leaves of THREE, let them be.” The plant's oils cause a very painful rash that can last from one to three weeks. If the liquid from this plant gets on clothes or skin or even garden tools, it must be washed off with strong soap, and clothing laundered with plenty of detergent, as soon as possible. The rash is not contagious after careful washing. If any of the plant's oils are left on tools or surfaces, they can take years to dissipate. Even dead poison ivy plants are dangerous to touch or handle!

Poison Ivy vines can be mistaken for the Virginia creeper vine, which has FIVE leaves. Poison Ivy grows on the ground in single plants, colonies, or as a shrub, or as a vine. It climbs fences, walls and trees like Virginia Creeper; but Poison Ivy vines are hairy, and the vines cling much tighter to tree bark.



Virginia Creeper

The good news is that once you identify Poison Ivy, you will recognize its leaves forever, and you'll stay away from it. The pictures above are very accurate. By the way, many plants have three leaves; but the CENTER STEM on poison ivy is longer, set away from the side leaves-check it out in the photos.

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