

**Question: Every year we have at least one case of poison ivy, what can we do to prevent it?**

**Answer:** Any person working outdoors is at risk of exposure to poisonous plants, such as poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. When in contact with skin, the sap oil (urushiol) of these plants can cause an allergic reaction. Workers may become exposed through direct and indirect contact as well as inhalation from burning particles.

Know how to recognize it!! - three leaves, usually not serrated, often shiny; alternating branches; no thorns; climbing and ground cover; climbing often on dead trees.

Wear Proper Protective clothing for the job – cover legs, arms, feet, and hands, if needed; especially when weed eating in areas where unseen poison ivy may exist – eye protection too! Use Rubber gloves not latex; The plant oil, urushiol penetrates latex and will result in exposure.

Wash hands and exposed skin & tools with cold or cool water (hot will open your pores to the plant oil) after coming in contact with plants; use a hard spray for tools/equipment & then wipe with alcohol. Consider using designed barrier creams or cleansers to remove urushiol from skin.

Remove plants from frequently used areas as the plants will overtake an area; physically remove (including roots); herbicides or biologically control with goats! Don't use a weed eater to cut down the plants; this will pulverize the plants and spread the sap and oil. NEVER burn poison ivy to control it.

Learn more at [Poisonous Plants | NIOSH | CDC](#) or [NSC 5 min talk on Poison Plants](#)

