

PLANTS TO AVOID

POISON SUMAC ~ *Toxicodendron vernix*

Poison Sumac Plant



Poison Sumac Leaves on Leaflet



Blisters from contact with Poison Sumac



Poison Sumac is a plant capable of causing extremely severe skin irritations, itching and blistering of the skin in areas of contact. This is caused by oils called Urushiol.

The Urushiol content in Poison Sumac far exceeds that found in Poison Ivy and Poison Oak, and it is thus considered to be the most toxic plant species found in the United States.

Poison Sumac can grow as a small tree or shrub, up to 10 feet tall. It produces yellow/green flowers & white/green berries. Poison Sumac can be distinguished by its red leaf stem.

If performing a burn in an area known or thought to be infested with Poison Sumac, avoid inhaling the smoke. The sooty smoke will cause severe external AND internal damage (Esophageal swelling, closing, swelling around the eyes, and other severe lung injuries), or even death.

Approximately 90% of people are allergic to Urushiol to varying degrees.

Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years.

Remedies:

Swabbing with alcohol, or washing with soap immediately after exposure *MIGHT* remove the oil irritant.

There are pharmaceutical products available for both before and after exposure to Urushiol oils.

Some products to help dry oozing blisters:

- Aluminum acetate (Burrows solution)
- Baking soda
- Aveeno (oatmeal bath)
- Aluminum hydroxide gel
- Calamine lotion
- Kaolin
- Zinc acetate
- Zinc carbonate
- Zinc oxide

Poison Sumac is NOT found in the state of Iowa