

Poison Ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*)



Poison ivy is native to Bermuda and Eastern North America. It is often found in parks and nature reserves, along roadsides, on small islands and in other wild places. It can even be found on the edge of marshes like Paget Marsh. It often grows as a woody vine along the ground or around other trees. Occasionally poison ivy grows as a small shrub with a woody stem.

The leaves of poison ivy are made up of three smooth edged leaflets held on a reddish stem. Poison ivy produces clusters of small greenish white flowers in spring and summer, which are followed by clusters of small berries.



Poison ivy is famous for causing painful skin irritation and itchy rashes. The irritation develops when your skin comes in contact with Urushiol – an oil produced by the plant. The oil can be spread on your shoes, clothing and tools or by touching anything that has been in contact with the plant (including your dog!). Washing with a 'grease fighting' dish detergent after contact can help remove the oil.

Poison ivy can be controlled with Roundup herbicide. It should never be burned as the smoke can cause serious lung damage. Learn to identify it and avoid whenever possible as you explore Bermuda!



Poison ivy can grow low to the ground (above) or on trees and walls as a vine (right). It also grows as a shrubby tree.



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Identifying Poison Ivy



Poison ivy has three smooth edged leaflets on a reddish stem.

Each leaflet can reach up to 4 inches in length, but leaf size varies widely.

The leaflets have prominent veins running to the leaf edge.

Leaf colour varies widely also from yellowish green to reddish green to dark green.

The surface of new leaves may appear shiny, especially in spring.

Poison ivy can grow as a climbing vine, woody shrub up to 5 feet tall or low along the ground. It can be found in most woodland and marsh habitats in Bermuda.



Poison ivy vine on an abandoned building



A large poison ivy patch in coastal woodland



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Poison Ivy Look-alikes



Poison ivy can be confused with Virginia creeper, which is also a vine with a red leaf stem. Virginia creeper has serrated leaf edges and 5 leaflets - it is not harmful if touched.



Poison Ivy



Virginia Creeper

Poison ivy also resembles Brazil pepper. Brazil pepper has 5 - 13 leaflets on a red stem. The leaflets of Brazil pepper are smaller and narrower than poison ivy.



Brazil Pepper

