

Ivy Can Be Dangerous

There are a number of plants growing in North Carolina that can cause severe skin rash on humans, but one plant—poison ivy—is nearly always the culprit when the rash, or dermatitis, occurs.

Two other familiar plants that can cause the skin irritations are poison oak and poison sumac. But poison ivy is by far the most abundant of the three and is wider spread across the state.

In fact, North Carolina State University experts suspect that poison ivy exists in every county of the state. About the only areas where it won't be found are those in the high mountains above 4,000 feet.

All three plants should be avoided. To do that, you need to know how to recognize them. NCSU botanists provide these descriptions:

Poison ivy is a perennial, woody, low shrub or vine often found clinging to trunks of trees but not limited to this location. Its leaves alternate on the stem, each leaf with three leaflets borne at the top of a common stalk. The stalk is slightly hairy. The leaflets are variable in that they may have either smooth edges, edges with large teeth or edges with shallow lobes.

The upper leaflet surface will become smooth with age and the lower surface will be smooth or with a few hairs along the veins or in the axils of the major veins. The leaflets are thin, shiny green during the spring and summer and turn orange or red in the fall.

Poison oak is also perennial, erect, low woody shrub and, unlike poison ivy, it never climbs. Its leaves are like those of poison ivy except thicker and coarser and with a hairy leaf stalk. The leaflets are deeply toothed or lobed with a hairy margin or edge. The leaflets are hairy on both sides.

Poison sumac is a woody shrub that grows to five to

eight feet or into a small tree up to 20 feet tall. The leaves alternate on the stem. There may be seven to 13 leaflets along a central, reddish axis. The leaflets are smooth and with a smooth or slightly wavy edge.

The leaves turn a brilliant red in the fall.

Choosing Plant Containers

There is a variety of materials to choose from in selecting containers for house plants. Each type has its advantages and disadvantages.

N. C. Agricultural Extension Service specialists suggest, for example, that clay pots keep soils cooler than other rigid containers, so they are particularly good for summer picture.

The main disadvantage of clay pots is that salts and algae may accumulate on the surface making the containers unattractive.

In general, plants grown in clay pots need 50 to 100 per cent more water than plants grown in nonporous containers.

Plastic containers keep roots warmer than clay pots. They come in a wide range of colors and remain clean. Plastic containers may keep soil too hot during the late spring, summer and early fall especially if plants are located outdoors or in well-lighted rooms.

See-through plastic or glass containers may develop an unreasonable growth of algae on the inner surface of the containers. Also, these containers are not always made in a standard size. Therefore, it may not be possible to shift plants grown in these containers to other pots.

If you want to use decorative containers, you may do well to keep your plants in standard-size pots, and slip the plant-pot and all-into the decorative container.

If you want to put your plants into a built-in or portable planter, place each plant in an individual pot. Then place all the pots into peat moss or surround them with bark chips, rock chips or foam.

If light hits the plants from one-side only, rotate the plants periodically.

NOTE OF THANKS
I would like to take this means to acknowledge with great appreciation the concern and many acts of kindness shown me during my stay in Chowan Hospital, N. C. Memorial Hospital and since my return home.

May God's richest blessings be yours.
Gwendolyn (Pete) Smith Pd.

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