



CHRISTENSEN'S PLANT CENTER

Wholesale Supplier To Landscape Professionals

Wrong plant, wrong place!

It's everywhere this year and everybody is getting it - urushiol-induced contact dermatitis. Urushiol is the oil that causes this allergic reaction and it is present in several members of the family Anacardiaceae. Some of the more familiar and non-poisonous members of this family are Rhus (sumac, such as *R. aromatica* 'Gro-Lo' and *R. typhina* 'Tiger Eyes') and *Cotinus* (smokebush; *C. coggygia* 'Royal Purple'). These add beautiful color to the garden and fragrance when leaves are cut.



It is another, much more infamous and ubiquitous member of the Cashews that has our attention, *Toxicodendron radicans* (because it roots along with vigor) or sometimes *pubescens* (becoming more hairy and juicy as it matures). This "toxic-tree" grows in almost any soil type in every region of North America. It exists as an herbaceous or woody vine, shrub (*T. rydbergii*), or even as a tree (*T. vernix*). The species name, *vernix*, means "varnished" or lacquered. This explains why the rash from these plants takes so long to get rid of.

No one likes having to deal with Poison Ivy, but, if you are exposed, wash with a non-oil-based soap and have Tecnu on hand. Learn to recognize *Toxicodendron* in its variant forms. Information abounds as well as images to help identify poison ivy. Click this link for an article about the Montreal Botanical Garden – Poison Plant Garden: <http://thegardendiaries.wordpress.com/2012/04/06/danger-poison-in-the-garden/>



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The foliage of poison ivy is attractive and growth is often lush (or rampant). Someone from England thought so highly of it they took it back to the British Isles. Guess what? Downy woodpeckers love the white berries and are responsible for its ability to reappear when you thought you just got it under control. Goats eat anything, including poison ivy, and often do a better job of getting it under control than chemical herbicides.

Finally - "Leaves of three, let it be!" and "Hairy rope, don't be a dope!"

JG – Wrong Plant Guy

