



## Poison Ivy

### *Toxicodendron radicans*

Poison ivy is a common plant found in New Jersey.

It can grow as a creeping or climbing vine or shrub. The vine of the poison ivy plant will appear hair-like. The leaves on the vine will be alternate.

The leaves grow in almond-shaped leaflets of three. Mature leaflets are somewhat shiny. Leaf color is light to dark green depending on the age of the leaves. The leaf edges have few or no teeth and the surface is smooth.

The flowers of the poison ivy plant are greenish or yellowish-white, inconspicuous and grow in clusters. The plant flowers from May-July.

The fruit, called a drupe, resembles a berry. It will mature between August and November and is a grayish-white in color.

This plant is poisonous to people. It contains an urushiol compound that causes an allergic reaction in most people. This reaction causes severe itching and blistering where the urushiol was in contact with the skin.

Poison ivy is edible to wildlife. Birds migrating south for the winter will eat the berries to fuel up for their flights. They help disperse the poison ivy seeds. White-tailed deer will also eat poison ivy.

*What do you do if you come in contact with the plant?*

If you do encounter poison ivy, you should immediately wash any place where the oils may have come in contact with your skin.

Also wash any clothing that may have touched the plant.



### **Ask A Naturalist**

There are a few rhymes that we can learn to help us remember what poison ivy looks like.

“Leaves of three, leave it be.”

“Don’t be a dope, avoid the hairy rope.”

“Berries of white, birds take flight.”

So next time you are in the woods, see if you can spot any poison ivy. But don’t get too close!