

More Information

Glossary of Terms Used:

Exotic - (Also defined as “alien species”) - any species not native to the regional or local ecosystem.

Invasive - a species that has the ability to quickly spread and form a monoculture often because of a lack of competition from other plants or natural predators. Also, an alien species whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health.

Native - a species that, other than as a result of an introduction, historically occurred or currently occurs in the regional or local ecosystem.

Dermatitis - a common term used to describe inflammation of the skin, i.e. rash, allergic reaction.

Phototoxin - a substance upon exposure to ultra-violet light (present during sunny and cloudy days) causes discoloration of the skin, rashes, or blistering (dermatitis).

Urushiol - the allergen, dermatitis causing oil found on poison sumac and poison ivy.

What should you do if you are exposed?

Poison Ivy and Poison Sumac have **oils** that can be transferred from the plant to skin. These oils are fairly unnoticeable and relatively persistent unless removed via washing. Wild Parsnip and Leafy Spurge, generally require the plant leaves or stems to be broken, releasing the plant juices/sap that can be transferred to skin, clothing, or equipment. If you believe you have come in contact with these plants (ivy and sumac) or their sap (parsnip and spurge), you should thoroughly wash exposed skin with soap and water, avoid touching exposed clothing or equipment until they too can be washed. Do not touch around your eyes.

Rashes usually appear within 8 to 48 hours after exposure. Many times the rash from these plants can be treated at home. Use wet compresses and take cool baths. Over-the-counter antihistamines and calamine lotion may help to relieve symptoms. Severe exposure requires treatment by a doctor. Any contact or irritation of the eyes would warrant immediate attention from medical personnel. As long as plant sap or oils have been washed from affected areas, you cannot catch or spread a rash after it appears, it is not contagious. The rash lasts 1 to 3 weeks if left to run its course. People who are very sensitive to urushiol may take up to 6 weeks to heal.

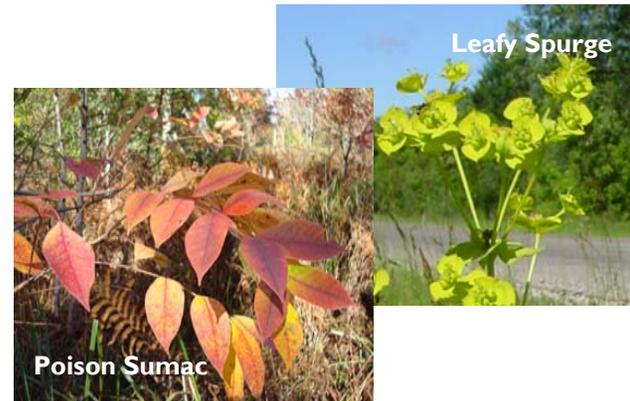
What is the best way to avoid exposure?

Prevention is the best medicine. The easiest way to prevent a reaction is to identify and avoid the plants. If contact with the plants is unavoidable, wearing heavy long pants, long-sleeved shirt, gloves, and barrier creams or lotions may help protect you. Wash any clothes that comes in contact with these plants separate from all other laundry. Use hot water and a detergent recommended to neutralize oils etc.

Hazardous Plants on Fort McCoy

What do these plants have in common?

- Found throughout Fort McCoy
- Pose health and safety risks to soldiers and civilians
- Should be avoided-if possible



A Closer Look



Poison Ivy
Toxicodendron radicans

Poison Ivy is a native plant commonly found in forests, forest edges, floodplains, and openings. Its leaves are alternate, three parted, shiny leaflets,

sometimes with large teeth or shallow lobes. In this region it is usually a low-growing, woody stemmed, shrub or rambling vine, **not** the large climbing vine as in the southern U.S. The plant has white berries in late summer/early fall and the leaves can range from yellow to orange to red in the fall. The plant contains the oil called urushiol. Contact with all parts of the plant causes a rash and oozing blisters. Severe exposure will need medical attention.



Poison Ivy rash



Poison Sumac
Toxicodendron vernix

Poison Sumac is a native shrub that grows along stream corridors, swamps, and wet shady areas. The leaves are pin-

nately divided into 7-13 smooth edged leaflets. A key identifier of this species is the tan to whitish (bone colored) bark and white berries in late summer through fall. Poison sumac can grow to small tree size (up to 20'). Like Poison Ivy, all parts of the plant contain urushiol and its effects are sometimes considered worse than that of Poison Ivy.



Sumac berries



Wild Parsnip
Pastinaca sativa

Wild Parsnip is an invasive, exotic plant that was introduced as food in colonial times. It has since escaped and become established in many areas. It

is an erect, perennial plant 1-5' tall. Its yellow flowers form an umbrella shape similar to Wild Carrot or Queen Anne's Lace and blooms in June and July. It is commonly found on Fort McCoy (in small populations) in disturbed areas, wet areas, and roadside ditches. The sap of the plant is a phototoxin. If the sap on the skin is exposed to the sun, the result is a chemical burn with blisters. Phototoxicity can be amplified by humidity and perspiration.



Wild Parsnip burn



Leafy Spurge
Euphorbia esula

Leafy Spurge is an invasive, exotic species that grows between 12-18" tall with bluish-green leaves and yellow-green flowers (bracts)

that bloom May-Sept. It grows mostly in forest openings, grasslands, and pastures. It forms dense stands or colonies that out-compete other native vegetation. It has a milky sap (latex) that can cause dermatitis and possible blindness if large amounts come in contact with the eyes.



Leafy Spurge monoculture

For more information:

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On the Web:

<https://extranet.mccoy.army.mil/AKO/safety/index.asp>

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/invasives/plants.asp>

<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/>

<http://wisplants.uwsp.edu/index.html>

<http://www.webmd.com/>

<http://www.poison-ivy.org/>