



Montgomery Parks offers Plant Safety Info: Poison Ivy and Poison Oak



Poison Ivy



Poison Oak

Leaves of three; leave it be! Poison Ivy and Poison Oak are present throughout parks, and are easily identified, but can be difficult to avoid if you go off of the trails. Keep an eye out for these plants both at the ground layer, and especially near climbing vines on trees.

A case of Poison Ivy can wreak havoc for a week or more causing a painful, irritating rash. To avoid it as best as possible, wash hands, clothes, shoes and laces carefully following hikes in the woods.

The oils from these plants can remain even after thorough washings. According to the American Academy of Dermatology, most cases can be treated at home by rinsing the infected areas with warm water and soap, washing everything that may have been exposed to the oils, and avoiding scratching. Cool compresses and lotions such as calamine or hydrocortisone can also help. . However, you should go to the emergency room at your local hospital if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- * Trouble breathing or swallowing
- * A rash that covers most of your body
- * Swelling – especially if an eyelid swells shut
- * A rash on your face or genitals or
- * Inability to sooth itching from the rash.