POISON IVY AND IVY POISONING.

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Of the six species of Rhus occurring in Ohio, namely, Rhus copallina, Dwarf Sumac; Rhus hirta, Staghorn Sumac; Rhus glabra, Smooth Sumac; Rhus aromatica, Fragrant Sumac; Rhus vernix, Swamp Sumac or Poison Elder, and Rhus radicans, Poison Ivy (sometimes confused with Rhus toxicodendron, a southern species), only the two latter are poisonous. These are generally so well known as to be avoided—the Poison Ivy being a suspicious-looking vine or occasionally a small, shrubby, upright plant with three leaflets. It need never be mistaken for the Virginia Creeper, since the leaves of the latter are composed of five leaflets. The Swamp Sumac seldom occurs away from swamps and its resemblance to the other large Sumacs generally suffice to identify it. This species has not, however, a dense cluster of bright-colored fruits at the end of the branches, but open, dull-colored panicles below the terminal leaves.

It has been determined that the poison of the two Sumacs is an oil, stable not volatile. It is called "toxicodendrol," and occurs in all parts of the plant. An account of Ivy poisoning and its treatment is given in Rhodora by Dr. Pfaff, of the Harvard Medical School, from which we here summarize the more important parts.

The toxicodendrol is easily soluble in alcohol, ether, chloroform, etc., but insoluble in water. To prevent poisoning, immediately after contact with the plant thoroughly wash the parts with soap, using a scrubbing brush. Unless the washing is thorough it might serve merely to spread the poisonous oil more widely over the skin. The application of a solution of lead acetate in alcohol is recommended, which may take the place of the above. It gives a precipitate of lead-compound which is nearly insoluble in alcohol and can then be removed by washing.