

# Preventing Exposure to Poison Oak and Other Rash-Causing Plants

Each year CIS receives workers' comp claims related to itchy skin, rashes, and swelling from exposure to poison ivy, poison oak, and sumac. These plants are prevalent in many parts of Oregon. Here's how to spot them.

## POISON IVY

- Grows as both vine and shrub
- Distinct pointed leaves are in groups of three
- Usually has a single large center leaf with two smaller ones on the sides
- Shape of the leaf varies but they all end in a point
- Yellow-green flowers in the spring with leaves changing from green to a yellow or red color by fall



## POISON OAK

- Grows often as small shrub, but also as vine
- Green leaves found as sets of three within clusters
- Tends to be a duller green color than poison ivy



## POISON SUMAC

- Grows in either small tree or big bush form
- Leaves uniquely identified by black or brownish-black spots along with yellow flowerings
- Leaves grow in clusters of seven to 13 leaves, with one by itself at the end



## PREVENTION

Wear long-sleeved shirts and pants, closed-toe shoes, and gloves when working or gardening where these plants are found. The use of a topical barrier cream such as Ivy x, or Tecnu, is also recommended.

## TREATMENT

Generally, rashes form as red and itchy skin bumps. In some instances, they can occur as black streaks or spots. If exposed, wash skin with soap within the first hour to remove the Urushiol oils from the plant; this is the oil that causes the rash. Washing your skin can reduce the rash. NIOSH recommends wiping contact area with alcohol prep pads. Also, wash all clothing and work equipment after any contact. Do not take clothing home to wash, to prevent any cross-contamination.

Stay safe and do your best to avoid these troublesome plants — and the rashes that they bring with them!

