

Column Name- The Heartland Minute

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*“Poison Ivy ID and Control”*

Most of us are able to ID poison ivy without much debate, but a little refresher never hurt anyone as it grows in multiple forms with varying leaf appearances. Three varieties include erect woody shrub, climbing wood vine and groundcover. In the vining habit, aerial roots give the vines a fuzzy, rope-like appearance. As a groundcover, poison ivy is often confused with Virginia creeper or Woodbine. These poison ivy shrubs appear in fields, pastures, woods or even the home garden.

Leaf margin varieties range from toothed, incised, lobed or smooth, but as we know, poison ivy will always appear in groups of three. Leaf size can vary, but the middle leaflet is the only one with a long stalk and is larger than the other two. The other two leaves are closely attached to the leaf stem. When you remove these plants, wear pants, long sleeves and gloves. Also, wash clothing and your skin to remove traces of plant toxins when you are done with the process.

In the groundcover form, direct spray or digging are common strategies for removal. Make sure the soil is moist before attempting to dig the plant up and get the root system. Herbicide can be used on the shrub version of poison ivy. A foliar application of Glyphosate can be utilized while the leaves are still green. Be sure to avoid drift on to nearby plant life you do not wish to damage. For wood vines of poison ivy, cut the plant off at the base and treat the emerging sprouts with herbicide when they appear.

Information comes from K-State horticulture instructor, Cynthia Domenghini.

For more information regarding Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, or K-State Research and Extension call the office at 620-583-7455, email me, Ben Sims, at benjam63@ksu.edu, or stop by the office which is located inside the courthouse. Be sure to follow K-State Research and Extension- Greenwood County on Facebook for the most up-to-date information on Extension education programs and the Greenwood County 4-H program.