

# Integrated Pest & Crop Management



## Weed of the Month: Poison Ivy

by Mandy Bish and Kevin Bradley

Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) is a native perennial weed that can occur in landscapes, woods, fencerows, pastures and haylands across the U.S. The plant is the major cause of allergic dermatitis in the eastern U.S. Yet it can be difficult to identify given the variability in the shapes of the leaflets and its growth habit; hence the commonly used phrase, “leaves of 3, let it be.”

Younger plants may appear erect and almost shrub-like as they get established (**Figure 1**). However, as the plant grows the vine becomes woody and can climb on other objects and vegetation (**Figure 2**) by attaching to the object with aerial roots (**Figure 3**). The plant may also trail along the ground (**Figure 4**). The stems of poison ivy are capable of rooting whenever they come into contact with the soil.

While the individual poison ivy leaflets can vary in shape, the general leaf structure is consistent, which will prove helpful in identification. Each poison ivy leaf is comprised of 3 leaflets. The 2 lateral leaflets attach to the stem via short petioles (the appendage that attaches the leaf to the stem). The middle leaflet tends to be attached by a much longer petiole (**Figures 2 and 5a**), and all 3 leaflets are glabrous, or lack hairs on the surface. Leaflets can be toothed or without teeth, and most



Figure 1: A young poison ivy plant may appear erect and almost shrub-like.



Figure 2: Poison ivy can commonly be seen growing on trees



Figure 3: Aerial roots allow poison ivy to climb



Figure 4: Poison ivy can also creep along the ground.

### In This Issue

Weed of the Month: Poison Ivy.....	1
Weather Data for the Week Ending August 26 .....	4

Continued on page 2 ►



## Weed of the Month: Poison Ivy, continued.

commonly has lobed edges. Typically, the 2 lateral leaflets are distinctly lobed on one side of the leaflet but not the other, and each leaflet is from  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 4" long and wide. The leaves tend to be a bright, shiny green earlier in the summer but will turn red or reddish yellow as fall approaches.

Typically poison ivy reproduces by the creeping roots and stems; however, the plants can also produce seed. Poison ivy flowers are small and yellowish green to green in color. They occur in clusters of 2 to 6 and usually arise between the petioles and the stem. Birds eat the berries, which turn from green to white as they mature (**Figure 5b**), and then disperse the seeds. When seeds germinate, the seedlings' cotyledons are oval and the first true leaves are divided into three leaflets (**Figure 5c**).

Poison ivy can be mistaken with Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) and poison oak (*Toxicodendron toxicarium*). However, Virginia creeper leaves are divided

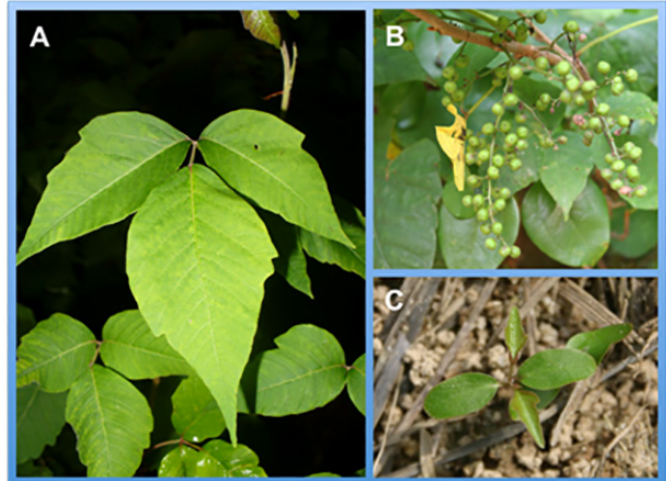


Figure 5: The leaflets (A), berries (B), and newly emerging seedlings (C) of poison ivy.



## MU IPM Pest Monitoring Network

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# Weather Data for the Week Ending August 26, 2015

Station	County	Weekly Temperature (°F)						Monthly Precipitation (in.)		Growing Degree Days‡	
		Avg. Max.	Avg. Min.	Extreme High	Extreme Low	Mean	Departure from long term avg.	August 1-26	Departure from long term avg.	Accumulated Since Apr 1	Departure from long term avg.
Corning	Atchison	82	55	86	48	69	-6	2.43	-0.80	2808	+118
St. Joseph	Buchanan	80	58	84	52	69	-6	1.16	-2.33	2740	+64
Brunswick	Carroll	82	55	86	48	69	-6	1.59	-2.01	2947	+233
Albany	Gentry	79	53	83	46	66	-9	3.72	+0.58	2571	-66
Auxvasse	Audrain	81	55	83	50	68	-6	0.48	-2.56	2805	+57
Vandalia	Audrain	80	54	84	49	67	-8	1.87	-1.58	2787	+83
Columbia-Bradford Research and Extension Center	Boone	79	55	81	51	67	-8	4.15	+0.47	2792	-25
Columbia-Capen Park	Boone	83	53	86	49	67	-10	2.61	-1.00	2825	-90
Columbia-Jefferson Farm and Gardens	Boone	80	56	83	52	68	-7	3.20	-0.47	2877	+53
Columbia-Sanborn Field	Boone	81	58	83	54	70	-7	2.45	-1.26	3009	+89
Columbia-South Farms	Boone	79	56	81	52	68	-7	3.31	-0.39	2840	+20
Williamsburg	Callaway	81	54	83	49	67	-8	1.17	-2.25	2826	+131
Novelty	Knox	78	55	80	51	66	-9	4.19	+1.30	2609	-45
Mosow Mills	Lincoln	79	55	81	51	68	-8	2.42	-0.52	*	*
Linneus	Linn	80	54	83	48	67	-7	1.74	-1.51	2674	+56
Monroe City	Monroe	79	54	82	48	67	-8	2.05	-0.97	2734	+21
Versailles	Morgan	82	56	84	51	69	-7	3.44	+0.23	2989	+101
Green Ridge	Pettis	81	56	84	49	69	-4	3.07	+0.15	2853	+130
Unionville	Putnam	77	54	80	49	66	-7	3.38	-0.98	*	*
Lamar	Barton	82	58	85	53	69	-9	5.25	+2.56	3020	+17
Butler	Bates	81	59	84	53	70	-8	2.79	-0.65	*	*
Cook Station	Crawford	79	52	80	47	66	-11	4.60	+1.58	2839	-52
Round Spring	Shannon	79	54	81	48	66	-9	4.97	+2.13	2822	+54
Mountain Grove	Wright	77	55	80	50	66	-10	4.93	+2.52	2736	+3
Delta	Cape Girardeau	81	55	84	49	68	-10	2.57	+0.15	3077	-109
Cardwell	Dunklin	82	60	86	54	70	-9	4.46	+2.52	3371	-78
Clarkton	Dunklin	83	59	87	53	71	-8	2.21	+0.34	3357	-41
Glennonville	Dunklin	82	59	86	53	70	-9	3.51	+1.68	3383	0
Charleston	Mississippi	82	59	88	54	70	-7	2.17	+0.04	3338	+124
Hayward	Pemiscot	82	60	88	52	71	-8	1.35	-0.50	3506	+105
Portageville	Pemiscot	82	61	87	56	72	-7	2.10	+0.25	3519	+96
Steele	Pemiscot	82	59	88	53	71	-8	2.72	+0.77	3447	+17

‡Growing degree days are calculated by subtracting a 50 degree (Fahrenheit) base temperature from the average daily temperature. Thus, if the average temperature for the day is 75 degrees, then 25 growing degree days will have been accumulated.

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