July 2017

Have you seen this?

Identify Poison Ivy!

This is poison ivy (Toxicodendron radicans). It can grow as a vine, but it also can appear in a leafy or shrubby form in woodlands, fields, and home landscapes. Its appearance can vary depending on the age of the plant and the conditions in which it's growing.

Poison ivy is a native plant and its berries provide a valuable food source for birds, which aid in the spread of its seeds. This is often how we find new poison ivy popping up in our gardens!

Many people see the "leaves of three" and the "oak-like" shape of the leaves and express concern about poison oak. Atlantic poison oak (Toxicodendron pubescens) is a low growing relative, but is less commonly encountered.

Learn more about poison ivy and take the poison ivy quiz to see if you can recognize its look-a-likes.

_______________________________

July Tips

- **Squash vine borer** larvae are feeding inside squash and pumpkin stems. Monitor plants for signs of wilting and entrance holes on lower stems. You may see sawdust-like frass around the hole. Cut a slit above the hole with a razor, remove the 1 inch long white larva (with a brown head), and mound up soil around the wound.
- **Early blight of tomatoes** is widespread now. This fungal disease causes small, irregular brown lesions with a yellow halo on lower leaves. The spots have a bull's eye pattern. They will enlarge and entire
leaves will turn yellow and then die. Defoliation can then lead to sunscald of tomato fruits. Septoria leaf spot is a similar fungal disease that often occurs with early blight. Remove lower leaves, keep a thick organic mulch around plants, and avoid overhead watering. Applications of tri-basic copper will slow down severe infections.

More July Tips

What's hot ➤

Trending Topics

Fruit - General disease and insect pest control recommendations.
Ask a Master Gardener - Do you have a plant sample you would like to show someone? Or is something growing in your yard you would like identified?
Monitor vegetable crops - At least once a week for plant problems. Identify the cause of major problems to enable you to manage it this year and prevent it next year.

Featured Videos ➤

Grow Your Best Basil: Easy Care for Basil Plants

Grow your best basil. Meredith Epstein, Sustainable Agriculture lecturer at the Institute of Applied Agriculture, walks us through the simple steps to get more and better basil.

View on YouTube

Q&A ➤

Can you please identify these insects on my crape myrtle?
These are called Barklice or Tree Cattle (*Cerastipsocus* sp.). Barklice are often found on smooth-barked trees and shrubs, including crape myrtles and magnolias. Barklice do not feed on living plants. They feed on lichens, decaying organic matter, dead insects, molds, fungi, and pollen. They are not harmful to trees and shrubs, and no control is necessary.

Mohammed El Damir, Bugwood.org

Have a plant or pest question? University of Maryland Extension's experts have answers! Send in your questions and photos to Ask an Expert.

Have a suggestion for a topic to cover in the HGIC newsletter? Send in your suggestions.