

2024 February *Guess that Plant*



Toxicodendron vernix (L.) Kuntz., Poison Sumac

The February *Guess that Plant* is one of New Jersey's native shrubs, Poison Sumac. This species and its relatives poison ivy and poison oak form a trio of toxic plants native to our state. Each plant contains a skin irritant that can create severe allergic reaction to exposed skin. Poison sumac differs from its associated poison relatives by being an obligate wetland species and is often found on hummocks in standing water or under a palustrine canopy. Poison sumac differs from ivy and oak by its upright shrub habit, and by the distinct compound leaves. The *Guess that Plant* can be distinguished from other shrubby compound leaf sumacs by the red color of the leaf stem and the lack of hair on the leaves and stem.

Poison sumac is found State-wide, and is especially prevalent in the Pine Barrens and Outer Coastal Plain. Anyone entering palustrine wetlands should be aware of this shrub and avoid it since all parts of the plant causes dermatitis.

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