

Grimm's Goodies

Brothers Grimm Grass Company Inc.

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Crazy Shrubs?

Cooler temperatures and more than adequate rainfall has created ideal conditions for spring growth. While some plants are actually suffering from too much water, those that can handle it are growing like crazy, and in order to keep your landscape looking its best, an early summer pruning may be in order.



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Many shrubs benefit from being sheared to control

size and shape. Plants such as boxwood, holly, ewes, and barberry look very well kept when given a power trimmed haircut. However, hedge trimmers are not the answer to all shrubbery needs. Many plants such as Rhododendron, azalea, cotoneaster, and weeping cherry look much more natural when pruned by hand and cut at the proper growth points. If you're not sure of the proper pruning method for your landscape, I'll be glad to answer



any questions or simply take care of it for you. Either way, just give us a call and we will have you looking good in no time.

The Kiddos

Many of you regularly ask about Ella and Maren and from time to time, I like to give an update. Ella is now 4 years old and just finished her first year of preschool. She is really growing up and learning so much. She quite adores her little sister, Maren, who is now 4 months old. It is hard to believe how much Maren



has grown in these short 4 months, but she is now about 14 lbs and eats like a champ! She loves to sit up (with help) and see what is going on around her. Maren is a very happy baby and smiles and giggles quite often, which we enjoy. We think she is going to look just like her big sister as their baby pictures are very similar.

Plant Profile—POISON IVY



We have run this article a few times before in our newsletter and now that the poison ivy is out once again and Jacob just went through another stint of it, we thought it could bear repeating once again. In this installment of Grimm's Goodies, we hope to educate you on how to identify poison ivy so that you can avoid a horrible, itchy, painful rash and a possible trip to the doctor's office.

Poison ivy is the most common allergy in the country claiming half the population, and sensitivity to it can develop at any time. Maybe you rolled in poison ivy as a child and didn't get a rash. That is great, but you still need to be careful as you may be sensitive to it now. Urushiol oil is potent! Only 1 nanogram (billionth of a gram) of the oil is needed to cause a rash. Specimens of urushiol several centuries old have found to cause dermatitis in sensitive people. Urushiol oil will stay active on any surface

including dead plants for 1 to 5 years.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY POISON IVY?

How do you know if you have poison ivy and what does it look like? Poison ivy can appear as a ground cover, a shrub, or as a vine growing up a tree. Older vines are covered in fibrous roots resembling hair that grow into the supporting tree. **It has dull or glossy compound leaves on a long stem that are divided into 3 leaflets, each 2-4" (5-10 cm) long. The leaflets can be slightly lobed, and are a dark waxy green, above, and light, fuzzier beneath. A short stem sets off the end leaf. In the fall, the leaves will turn a maroon red color.**

Poison ivy flowers May through July in yellowish-white (possibly green) clusters, 1-3" (2.5-7.5 cm) long at the leaf axils. The flowers are 1/8" (3 mm) wide. In fall, poison ivy leaves turn red. Between August and November, poison ivy develops white or gray hairless fruit to 1/4" (6 mm) wide, in clusters that stay through winter and into spring, when not eaten by birds. Dead leaves and stems may have black stains on them, due to the oxidation of the urushiol oil.



Poison ivy grows throughout eastern North America, while its counterpart, poison oak, grows in western North America and has hairy fruit. Both can be found in Bermuda and the Bahamas. Poison ivy and poison oak grow in open woods, thickets, fence rows, stone walls, roadsides, and waste places. On roadsides, it

tends to be ground cover, and in sandy coastal areas, it tends to be an erect shrub. (HOLY COW!) In woods, you'll mostly see the vines on trees.

HOW DO I GET RID OF POISON IVY?

There is really only one way to get rid of poison ivy and that is to physically remove it. With that said, I have two words for you—body suit! When I think of this, I imagine people dressing up in full bio-chemical protective suits, complete with breather masks looking like they are part of a hazmat crew. Seriously, if you are actually clearing brush that has poison ivy, wear appropriate clothing, and remember that the resin will be on your clothing and shoes as you strip down for your shower. **DO NOT BURN POISON IVY EVER!**



Boxelder— Notice how the leaves come in pairs on the stem (opposites) - that's a solid clue for identification. It's amazing how this plant looks so close to poison ivy but with just enough differences to make identification easy. It is probably the plant most mistaken for poison ivy.



MYTH: Poison Ivy rash is contagious.

TRUTH: Rubbing the rashes won't spread poison ivy to other parts of your body (or to another person). You spread the rash only if urushiol oil -- the sticky, resinlike substance that causes the rash -- has been left on your hands.

MYTH: You can catch poison ivy simply by being near the plants

TRUTH: Direct contact is needed to release urushiol oil. Stay away from forest fires, direct burning, or anything else that can cause the oil to become airborne such as a lawnmower, trimmer, etc.

Mulberry—The leaves have very interesting shapes but are simple and alternating meaning the leaf has no leaflets (unlike poison oak which has 3 leaflets per leaf).



MYTH: Leaves of three, let them be.

TRUTH: Poison sumac has 7 to 13 leaves on a branch, although poison ivy and oak have 3 leaves per cluster.

MYTH: Do not worry about dead plants.

TRUTH: Urushiol oil stays active on any surface, including dead plants, for up to 5 years.

Virginia Creeper—It's not that uncommon to be allergic to virginia creeper. The 5 leaflet leaves with the leaflets attached at the same point resembling a palm is a dead giveaway.



MYTH: Breaking the blisters releases urushiol oil that can spread.

TRUTH: Not true. But your wounds can become infected and you may make the scarring worse. In very extreme cases, excessive fluid may need to be withdrawn by a doctor.

