

Western Poison Oak

Toxicodendron diversilobum

Regulatory Compliance Branch

What is it? The genus *Toxicodendron* is a group of flowering plants from the Sumac family. These plants contain woody trees, shrubs, vines, including poison oak and poison ivy. All members of this genus produce the skin-irritant urushiol. This irritant can cause severe allergic reactions in people.

What it does: Upon direct contact with leaves or stems of poison oak sensitive individuals develop itching and blisters 1-6 days after exposure. Exposure can also happen from contaminated clothes or equipment. In addition, breathing smoke particles with urushiol oils can cause severe respiratory irritation.

Treatment: Tecnu, available in drug stores, removes the urushiol oil from your skin. Tecnu should be used on equipment and pets as well. Make sure to wash areas that contacted poison oak within 2 to 8 hours.



How to prevent exposure: Preventing contact with poison oak first starts with being able to identify the plant. Poison Oak takes the form of a woody shrub or vine that loses its leaves during winter. The shrub is 1-6 feet high. Leaf size differs, but the leaves are similar to true oaks. The leaves are typically comprised of 3 leaflets with the occasional 5, 7, or 9 leaflets. In the spring small white-green flowers are produced, and whitish-green fruits form in late summer. Leaves can be green to light red.



References & more information: photos from www.calflora.org and <http://www.walgreens.com/store/c/tecnu-outdoor-skin-cleanser/ID=prod3984826-product>
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7431.html>