

## POISON OAK AND STINGING NETTLE



### PLANTS THAT HURT!

Poison oak produces a chemical compound called urushiol that can cause rash, swelling, itching, and pain. Stinging nettle has tiny hairs that inject histamines, causing pain and itching.

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### DEFENSE

Plants produce these chemicals to protect against animals like caterpillars and deer that would otherwise eat them. Other common plant defenses include spines, thorns, and attracting beneficial insects to protect them.

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## POISON OAK

- Leaves of three, let it be!
- Reddish color in the winter.
- In shady areas, like under oaks.
- Shiny, oak shaped leaves.
- Small, whitish flowers.

## STINGING NETTLE

- Square stems.
- Up to 5 ft. tall.
- In shady, often wet, areas.
- Tiny hairs are visible to the naked eye – avoid them!
- **Stinging nettle is edible when properly cooked!**



## POISON OAK TREATMENT

Though indigenous peoples drank poison oak infused tea to prevent poison oak, we don't recommend it! Poison oak can cause internal damage as well.

- Clean contacted area with soap and water.
- Products like "Tecnu" can be used to remove urushiol oils.
- Antihistamine (allergy) medicines and creams can help with itching and rash.

Extreme rashes, blistering, and skin damage from poison oak and stinging nettle should be treated by a doctor. Poison oak rash with facial swelling, throat swelling, or fever needs immediate medical attention!

