Avoid contact with Poison Ivy! Don’t touch it!

Wear long sleeves, long pants, socks, and gloves when working in areas where you suspect Poison Ivy grows.

The Poison Ivy reaction can be reduced if you wash the exposed skin with soap and water. Even water from a running stream is an effective cleaner. The oil from Poison Ivy can remain active on clothing and footwear as long as a year, so be careful not to expose yourself to the oil again. Change clothing as quickly as possible. Avoid touching clothing that may have the Poison Ivy oil on it, including gloves and shoes. The oil can be transmitted on pet fur and in the smoke of burning Poison Ivy. Never inhale the smoke from Poison Ivy!

In early spring before the leaves emerge, it is difficult to see and avoid poison ivy vines and stems, but they can still produce a painful, itchy rash. Avoid pulling any vine until you can see leaves and identify the plant.

You can also use various products on the market to specifically cleanse the oil from Poison Ivy off exposed skin. However, the best way to avoid the irritating rash is being able to identify Poison Ivy.

Poison Ivy is a nuisance to people but compensates by having considerable wildlife value. The white, waxy berries are a popular food for songbirds during fall migration and in winter when other foods are scarce. Robins, catbirds, and grosbeaks especially like the berries. Many birds feed on insects hiding in the tangled vines. Small mammals and deer browse in the Poison Ivy foliage, twigs and berries.

Poison Ivy Identification:
- Three divided leaves
- Center leaflet on a longer stalk
- White, waxy berries along the stem
- Leaves alternate on the stem
- Erect shrub or climbing vine

Poison Ivy
Virginia Creeper: Does NOT cause a rash!
- Three to five divided leaves
- Leaflets palmate like an outstretched hand
- Blue-black berries along the stem
- Trailing or climbing vine

Sources:
http://mdc.mo.gov/nathis/plantpage/flora/poivy
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/factsheets/vines/parthenocissus_quinque.html
http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/poison/Toxicra.htm