

About poison sumac

Poison sumac (*Toxicodendron vernix*) is a woody shrub or small tree that grows up to 20 feet tall. It bears a fruit which is a small white or grey berry, this helps distinguish it from other sumacs which have red berries. It also has shorter leaves and fewer leaflets as compared to other sumacs. It may be found in wet soils (usually found in swamps and peat bogs, in the eastern United States and Canada), whereas other sumacs prefer dry soil. It is considered an invasive weed in the U.S.

Winged sumac (*Rhus copallinum*) may be easily mistaken for poison sumac. It is distinguished by distinctive "wings" on the leaf stem (rachis) between the leaflets (see image to the right).

All parts of the poison sumac plant contain urushiol (a toxic resin) which can cause skin and mucous membrane irritation (urushiol-induced contact dermatitis) to humans. When burned, inhalation of the smoke may cause diarrhea and other internal irritations. More than half the people in the U.S. are sensitive to [poison ivy](#), [poison oak](#), and poison sumac.



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See also [poison ivy](#), [poison oak](#).