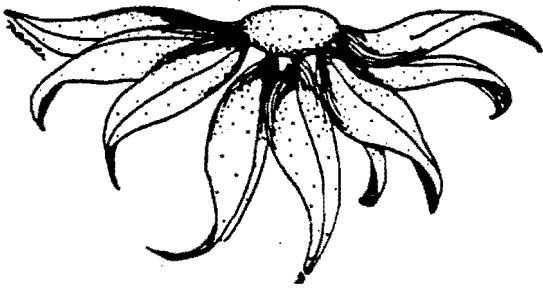


wild ones



# The Outside Story

newsletter for natural landscapers

vol. 4 no. 1

January—February 1991

Bayside, Wisconsin

THE CALL TO ATTEND our natural landscaping seminars is going out to people interested in restoration land management. On February 9, 1991, at the UWM Union, we will have a meeting of various specialists on and off of the stage: Naturalists, horticulturists, foresters, prairie buffs, conservationists, nurserymen, teachers and all who respect the earth and wish to protect its diversity of life.

Darrel Morrison, formerly Chairman of the Landscape Architecture Department in Madison, and currently Dean of Environmental Studies in Athens, Georgia will be our keynote speaker. People exclaim that this is a "real Coup" for us. Then they proceed to "coo" over the professional team following Morrison.

David Kopitzke returns each year because of participant demand for his inimitable instructions for beginners. "Oh! I just wish that I could spend the whole day with Kopitzke!"

Jerry Schwarzmeier, brings us his experience of twenty years as a dedicated research-scientist and prairie addict. WILD ONES and WEHR groups have toured his expert restorations at Retzer nature center in Waukesha.

Lunch time gives you the opportunity to view my slide collection of natural yards as you munch on your bag lunch from home.

Cliff Miller, a landscape contractor from Lake Forest, offers his expertise in the repair and reconstruction of woodland landscapes. He was the speaker at one of our monthly meetings some years ago, and was proclaimed the favorite of the season.

Joyce Powers stimulates us with wetland landscaping ideas. This dynamic woman is a long-time favorite of natural landscapers both as a speaker and as a supplier of plants and seeds from her famous nursery in Mt. Horeb.

Dan Boehlke inspires us with his background as a natural landscaping instructor as well as the owner of a native plant nursery in Germantown. Many members of our landscaping clubs owe their planting success to Daniel Boehlke practical advice.

Jock Engels brings us his extensive experience in public landscaping and maintenance. This presentation will be particularly useful to large land owners, or those entrusted with community or business property.

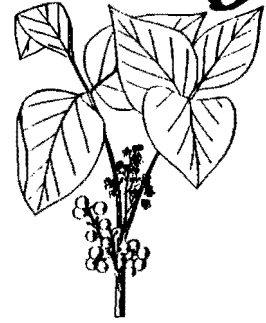


Terrie Otto

# The Inside Story

## POISON IVY

(*Rhus radicans*)  
Sumac Family



**OTHER NAMES:** Three-Leaved Ivy, Poison Creeper, Climbing Sumac, Poison Oak, Mercury, Mercury Vine, Markry, Mark-Weed, Picry, Trailing Sumac.

**HABITAT:** Thickets, roadsides, open woods, fence rows, waste places, often ascending high trees.

**DESCRIPTION:** Poison Ivy can be a climbing, trailing, or upright shrub. It bears small whitish-yellowish loose flower clusters that turn into off-white berries in the fall. The leaves are compound, divided into three glossy or dull green leaflets.

**Flowering:** May to July.

**COMMENTS:** The active ingredient in this plant is urushiol oil, "one of the most potent external toxins we know", says William L. Epstein, M.D., Chairman Emeritus and Professor of Dermatology at the University of California, San Francisco, School of Medicine. "The amount needed to cause a rash in very sensitive people is measured in nanograms, and could take as little as 1 nanogram...most people will react in the 100-nanogram range." A nanogram is a mere billionth of a gram; that means it would take less than 1/4 oz. of urushiol to cause a rash in every person on earth. Five hundred people could itch from the amount covering the head of a pin.

"When the Japanese restored the gold leaf on the golden Temple in Kyoto, they painted urushiol lacquer on it to preserve and maintain the gold," Dr. Epstein says. "The main message for American tourists there is, 'Don't try to steal the gold.'" You'll be caught red-handed. Literally.

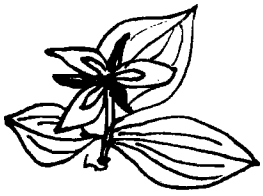
"The urushiol oil in this plant is never dormant. It's active even in the dead of winter, and commonly causes reactions in skiers and people who unknowingly gather the plants' twigs for kindling. Urushiol runs through the leaves, roots, vines — every part of the plant but the flowers," explains Dr. Epstein, who says that's why the honey made by bees from these flowers isn't allergenic. "But it tastes bitter and terrible," he adds.

The fruits of Poison Ivy are eaten by song and game birds with no adverse effects. The juice was formerly used as an indelible ink and in shoe creams.

**MEDICINAL USE:** Its medicinal use was discovered in 1794 in America. It was introduced to Europe in 1798. The leaves, along with a tincture, were included in various pharmacopaeias until as late as 1941. Now it is only used by homeopathic doctors. At one time, physicians used the plant for paralytic and liver disorders. American Indians rubbed leaves on their Poison Ivy rash as a treatment. Internal consumption may cause severe effects, necessitating steroid or other therapies. Smoke from burning plant or dried plant specimens more than 100 years old can still cause dermatitis. **Antidote:** Washing thoroughly with soap like Fels-Naptha or swabbing with alcohol immediately upon exposure removes the oil. The most popular herbal treatment is Jewelweed (*Impatiens capensis*), says Purdue University Professor of Pharmacognosy and author of The Honest Herbal, Varro E. Tyler, M.D. "There's little solid research, but in one clinical trial it worked just as well as prescription cortisone creams," he says. You can split the stem and put the juice on the rash. U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Botanist, James A. Duke, Ph.D., says he uses Jewelweed to stop the rash from developing. "I ball up the whole plant and make sort of a washrag out of it and wipe the poison sap off," he says.

**NAME ORIGIN:** The Genus Name, *Rhus* (Rus), is from the old Greek name for Sumac. The Species Name, *radicans* (rad'i-kanz), means "rooting."

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** Fortunately, I am not allergic to Poison Ivy. However, lest I get too cocky, a sensitivity to urushiol can develop at any time. I have a friend who had success with using Jewelweed to treat her rash. She had let it go for several days, until it was really getting serious. In desperation she broke some of the stems of Jewelweed and put it on her rash. Within moments the itch was gone and it immediately started to heal. She admitted that, even though it was growing abundantly on her property, she was still reluctant to try it. She was pleasantly surprised!



## From the Secretary ...

NOVEMBER speaker Carol Fuchs stressed planning the landscaping in your yard. You must consider the uses and needs for your yard, the type of soil you have, and the amount of light the various parts of your yard receive. You must also consider your surroundings. What is adjacent to your property? Do you have a view that you want to retain? Do you have an eyesore that you would like to block out?

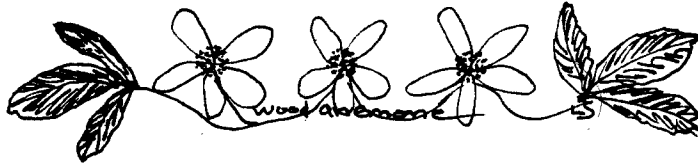
Carol also discussed the aesthetic considerations for landscaping including scale, colors, textures, balance, emphasis, unity, repetition, and line. In nature, there are very few straight lines, but rather curves. There are drifts and masses of plants that flow one into another. A sense of unity is formed through repetition. In nature, the focal point and emphasis changes throughout the seasons. You must consider three distinct layers when planning your landscaping: the ground cover, the shrubs, and the trees.

When considering maintenance of your landscaping, eliminate all little "islands" that need trimming. Make any mowed areas so that they can be cut in one clean sweep. Make your paths wide.

A beautiful slide presentation which dealt with specific plants for woodland and shaded areas accompanied the second half of Carol's talk. Virginia Waterleaf and wild strawberries were suggested as pioneer plants for woodlands. They are hardy and spread quickly. False sunflower, bergamots, and bee balms were suggested for partial shade or edge of wood areas. Most woodland flowers require a good deal of organic matter and moisture unless they are specific to dry woods.

DECEMBER: Our club president, Deb Harwell, showed slides of some of our past year's meetings and events. Our club's scrapbook and photo album was passed around. Deb also gave a presentation on the landscaping project that she has been coordinating at Indian Hills School on Brown deer Road. Woodland plants were planted under trees on the west side of the school, and a small pond and wet area was created where they drain tiles from the roof empty water onto the property. Three prairie gardens have been planted in the school's courtyard where children will see the flowers from the classroom windows.

A cable video program was also shown in which Lorrie interviewed Rae Sweet about her naturalized yard.



NEW NAME. . . Wild Ones -- Natural Landscapers, Ltd. By the time you read this our application for federal tax exempt stading 501 (C) (3) status will be filed, and with luck we will have been granted same. As part of the process it was necessary for us to incorporate with a new légal name. Many thanks to Sue Hurda for digging through our back financial records, Senator Robert W. Kasten, Jr. and his staff for expiditing our application with IRS, Deb Harwell for encouragement, Kai Imler for overseeing the process, and Judy Ficks for her assistance. Next month we'll explain the process and benefits so others can take advantage of our work.

# Calendar

JANUARY: Richard Barloga talks about landscaping with Wisconsin wildflowers.

FEBRUARY: Natural Landscaping Seminar, Wisconsin Room (Union) UWM, 8am-3pm.

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Calligrapher Betty Greaves designed our seminar poster and the enclosed registration form. She will also supply the speaker's name tags.

Donald and Evelyn Brocher, 1900 W. Greenwood Road, Glendale, Wisconsin, WILD ONE members recently won a Glendale Beautification Award for Nature Plantings.

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"Designing with Nature" is Rochelle Whiteman's natural landscaping slide presentation to be given at historic Turner Hall, 1034 N. Broadway, (across from the Bradley Center) on Sunday, January 6 at 3 pm.

Wild Ones -- Natural Landscapers, Ltd.



Pres. - Deb Harwell, 8712 N. Spruce Road, River Hills, WI 53217 (351-4253)  
V. Pres. - Lucy Schumann, 8108 N. Regent Road, Fox Point, WI 53217 (352-0313)  
Sec. - Kristen Summerfield, 7901 W. Bridge, Cedarburg, WI 53012 (375-1230)  
Treas. - Judi Ficks, 10848 N. Pebble Lane, Mequon, WI 53092 (241-3034)  
Newsletter - Carol Chew, 8920 N. Lake Drive, Bayside, WI 53217 (351-0644)  
Program Director - Lorrie Otto, 9701 N. Lake Dr., Bayside, WI 53217 (352-0734)

Meetings are held on second Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. at Schlitz Audubon Center, 1111 E. Brown Deer Road, Milwaukee, WI 53217, 414/352-2880. Dues are \$12/yr.



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