Poison Ivy

Poison ivy is a common problem in many West Virginia lawns, pastures, and waste areas. Poison ivy is a native perennial shrub that spreads both by rhizomes and seeds. Poison ivy contains a substance called urushiol that causes skin irritation in many people. If you come in contact with poison ivy, wash the affected area with soapy water. Animals are usually not sensitive to poison ivy.

According to specialists at Virginia Tech, poison ivy can be controlled in lawns and pastures with Banvel or Crossbow. Banvel and Crossbow should not be spray near or under sensitive trees, ornamentals, or garden species. Take care not to drift these herbicides onto sensitive species. Poison ivy can also be controlled with Roundup. Do not allow Roundup to contact desirable plants, as they will be killed also. Poison ivy should be treated in June when it is actively growing. Always read and follow herbicide labels for correct application procedures.

Poison ivy may be mechanically controlled by pulling or cutting. Poison ivy may need to be pulled or cut several times as it will regenerate from root stock. Gloves and equipment used to mechanically remove the poison ivy will be contaminated with urushiol and can cause an allergic response. Wash your clothes after dealing with poison ivy. Clean your tools with soapy water or alcohol after cutting poison ivy. Poison ivy can be pulled anytime, but it contains the least urushinol in the winter after the leaves have fallen off.

The cut poison ivy debris can still cause an allergic reaction, so care should be used in disposing of debris. It is best to bury the debris where it will not come in contact with humans. Poison ivy should not be burned after it is cut, as the urushiol will become airborne and could potentially affect many people.