



An Unholy Trinity

► **POISON IVY**, in one form or another, is almost continent-wide in its distribution. It ranges from Ontario southward to Florida and westward into the timberstrips along the streams of the Great Plains. A close relative, the Pacific Coast poison oak, takes up its fiendish job of promoting blisters-and-itch in the Far West.

These two species look so much alike they might as well be twins: trifoliate leaves, sometimes smooth-margined, sometimes notched or even deeply lobed, standing out on stiff woody stems which in turn are borne on a vine-like stalk shaggy with short roots. This stalk sometimes climbs trees and fences, sometimes runs along just under the ground surface like a shallow rootstock.

With so much variability in the species (sometimes even the same plant will have several different types of leaves) the ordinary citizen might almost despair of learning what poison ivy looks like, and hence being able to avoid it. However, one thing is constant through all this inconstancy: the triad of leaflets that make up the compound leaf. There is sound botany as well as sound advice in the old jingle: "Leaflets three, let it be!"

Best way to keep from getting ivy poisoning is to keep from getting too near to poison ivy. Don't touch the plant, and don't touch anything that you know has touched it. If you have inadvertently made contact with it, go and wash your hands and other exposed skin surfaces at once. Strong laundry soap is better than the ordinary mild toilet soaps for this purpose.

You may armor your skin against poison ivy in several different ways. The U. S. Public Health Service has a recommended formula for an ointment;

though it is understood that this is not always obtainable at present because of war-caused shortage in one of the necessary ingredients. There is another formula, older but still effective: a five per cent solution of ferrous sulphate in a half-and-half mixture of water and alcohol. Washed on the skin and allowed to dry, it deposits an invisible coating of the iron salt that neutralizes the poison before it can take effect. The same solution is also good for treatment, if exposure has already taken place.

Some persons are so sensitive to the plant's poison that no preventive treatment seems to give them any protection. On the other hand, about one person in three is so insensitive that he can handle the weed without ill effects. It is improbable, however, that there is any such thing as total immunity: if an insensitive person's resistance once breaks down, he is thereafter likely to be poisoned by the slightest contact.

Science News Letter, June 17, 1944

Just Off the Press

THE BABY MANUAL: A Practical Guide from Early Pregnancy through the Second Year of Life—Herman N. Bundesen—*Simon and Schuster*—590 p., illus., \$3.

DOLL PLAY OF PILAGA INDIAN CHILDREN: An Experimental and Field Analysis of the Behavior of the Pilaga Indian Children—Jules and Zunia Henry—*Am. Orthopsychiatric Assoc., Inc.*, 133 p., \$3.

DOWN TO EARTH: Mapping for Everybody—David Greenwood—*Holiday House*—262 p., illus., maps, paper, \$4.

EXPERIMENTAL SPECTROSCOPY—Ralph A. Sawyer—*Prentice-Hall*, 323 p., illus., \$5

MANDATE FROM THE PEOPLE—Jerome S. Bruner—*Duell, Sloan & Pearce*, 278 p., charts, \$2.75.

THE NAVY'S WAR—Fletcher Pratt—*Harper*, 295 p., illus., \$2.75.

PSYCHIATRY AND THE WAR, a survey of the significance of psychiatry and its relation to disturbances in human behavior . . . —Frank J. Sladen, ed.—*C. C. Thomas*—505 p., \$5. This book consisting of contributions to the Conference on Psychiatry of the University of Michigan and McGregor Fund is authoritative as well as interesting and timely.

Science News Letter, June 17, 1944

MILITARY SCIENCE

No Shelter of Darkness Along the Normandy Coast

► **SOLDIERS** fighting along the Normandy Coast will have no shelter of total darkness for night attacks. Twilight lasts all night for places with a latitude of 50 degrees or farther north, and it is just south of this that our men

are making their blows against the Axis felt where they count most.

From June 2 until July 12, evening twilight and morning twilight meet as far south as Dieppe, making it possible to see dimly throughout the entire night. The sun itself begins to appear at about 3:50 A. M., local time, at this season, and does not set until after 10 P. M.

In Paris there will be a short period of total darkness each night, but it will not last long enough for planes, either friendly or enemy, to secure much protection from the heavens. Farther north in Berlin, ever-present in the minds of our pilots, the city will be dimly visible from the air throughout the night.

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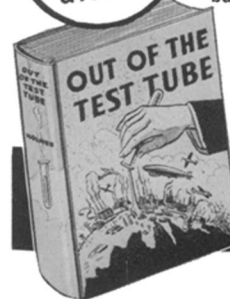
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