

Poison ivy – an irritating plant

Poison ivy can be found in nearly any part of Nebraska. Its usual growth habit is as a slender vine running along the ground, or growing in shrubs and trees. The vines are capable of growing to over an inch in diameter over a period of years. Poison ivy is often found along fence rows, roadsides and many other wooded areas. Always be on the lookout for this vine in these areas, regardless of the season. Poison ivy vines are poisonous the year around.

The toxin in poison ivy is an oil which causes an irritating skin reaction on many people. The reaction, an itchy rash with clear blisters, is variable in severity among people and can vary from year to year on the same individual.

The poison ivy reaction can

be reduced if you change clothing immediately and wash the exposed skin with soap and water. If you can wash all the oil off exposed skin within five minutes of contact, no reaction will occur. Even water from a running stream is an effective cleanser. The oil from poison ivy can remain active on clothing and footwear for as long as a year, so be careful not to expose yourself to the oil again. The oil can also be transmitted on pet fur and in the smoke of burning poison ivy.

Poison ivy control can be done at anytime of the year, but is best achieved May through July, while the plants are flowering. Poison ivy foliage, within reach, can be sprayed with glyphosate (sold under the trade names Roundup,

Kleenup and others), according to label directions. When using this or any herbicide, always read and follow label directions carefully. Take care to avoid other plants and do not spray so heavily the herbicide drips off the leaves. Glyphosate is a nonselective herbicide and will kill any vegetation it contacts.

To kill poison ivy that climbs high into trees, cut the vine off 6 inches above ground level. Treat the stump with glyphosate (according to label directions) immediately after cutting, to kill the roots and prevent sprouting. If resprouting does occur, treat the leaves with glyphosate. Poison ivy can be very persistent, so you may have to spray the vines two or more times for complete control. (DJ)



Butterfly gardening

Whole books have been written on attracting butterflies to your yard. The basic concept is simple: plant nectar plants for the adults and host plants for larvae to feed on.

Butterfly gardening can be as scientific and complex as you want to make it. You can simply plant a wide variety of flowering annual and perennial plants, shrubs and trees that you like. With a variety of plant families, flower shapes, colors and fragrant flowers in the garden; flowers and the nectar they contain, will be available for butterflies throughout the season.

Another approach is to make a systematic study of the butterflies in your area and which wild and cultivated plants attract which species. Planting host plants for larvae, as well as nectar plants for adults, increases your yard's appeal for butterflies. Even butterflies that don't feed on flowers at all, have to lay their eggs somewhere.

Wildflower nectar sources that will appeal to a wide variety

of butterfly species include goldenrod, milkweed, bergamot, butterfly milkweed, hoe-pye weed, phlox, red clover, black-eyed Susan, asters, wild strawberry, wild carrot and knapweed. Thistles and alfalfa also appeal to a wide variety of butterflies, but few homeowners want to encourage them in their yards. Daisies, coreopsis, buddleia (also called butterfly bush and summer lilac), asters, lobelia, sweet alyssum, verbena, salvia and zinnias are among the cultivated flowers that attract butterflies.

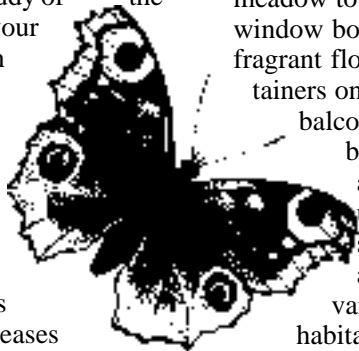
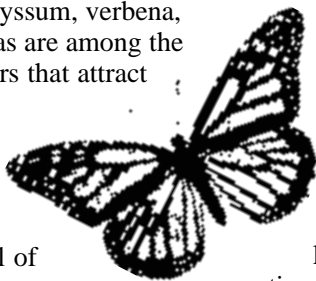
Anything from a sprawling wildflower meadow to a window box full of fragrant flowers or containers on an apartment balcony, can attract butterflies. Butterflies are everywhere, in urban as well as suburban and rural areas, though species vary with the local habitat. Some people cultivating plants for their own use, find that they've inadvertently put out the welcome mat for butterflies looking for egg-laying sites. The cabbage-green caterpillars that infest cabbage

and broccoli plants are the larvae of those common white butterflies that

seem to be everywhere in the summer. Others favor plants in the carrot family and may munch on cultivated carrot tops and dill weed as readily as on wild carrots.

Some people deal with this by planting extra for the butterflies and moving larvae from plants intended for family use to those reserved for butterfly rearing. Others allow or encourage out-of-way areas of the lawn or landscape to return to native plants such as milkweed, Queen Anne's lace, hoe-pye weed and thistles to provide food for butterfly larvae and adults.

A good field guide to butterflies can enhance your enjoyment. Looking up and identifying the species that come to your yard, finding out about their habitats and larval host plants and recording your sightings can be a great family activity and it may start your children on a lifetime interest in nature study. (DJ)



Tips to wash pesticide-contaminated clothing

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detergent to eliminate any residues left by the clothes. Hanging clothes outside is the best way to dry them, as the sun may degrade some of the pesticides.

Starch also can be used when laundering to help trap

pesticides on fabric surfaces. At the next washing, pesticides will come out of clothing easier.

Cleaned clothing used for chemical applications should be stored in a different place, away from other clothes and should be kept to wear only for pesticide

applications. Don't wear dirty, contaminated clothes two days in a row. Throw clothes away that had a lot of highly toxic chemical spilled on them. (TD)

SOURCE: Rose Marie Tondl, Ed.D., clothing specialist, NU/IANR



Americans are eating more cheese. According to the USDA, from 1970 to 1996 the U.S.'s consumption of cheddar cheese increased 59 percent to an average of 9.2 pounds per person.

Consumption of Italian cheese quintupled during the same period, to 10.8 pounds per person. The per capita consumption of mozzarella—the main cheese used in pizza—stood at 8.5 pounds in 1996, more than seven times higher than in 1970. (DJ)

Space heaters require a certain amount of air to work properly. They consume oxygen along with fuel and that oxygen must continually be replaced. In addition, the burning fuel produces carbon monoxide gas, which is deadly for humans. Space heaters should always have adequate ventilation, even if it makes them slightly less effective. Many space heaters also get hot on the outside and are easily tipped over. For electrical space heaters, hot electrical elements inside can contact combustible materials and start a fire. For propane-fueled heaters, the propane can flare up and ignite nearby objects. (DJ)

Acreage Insights



Tractor safety tips (part 5)


Tractors are one of the most important pieces of equipment on a farm, yet they are also among the most dangerous. More deaths are caused by tractors than by any other type of farm accident. It is, therefore, imperative that tractor owners routinely check their tractors and keep in mind the following safety guidelines:

Back out of ditches, holes or places where the tractor is mired or wedged. Extra time may be spent unhitching and moving machinery out of the way, but it will be a fraction of the time that may be spent healing from injuries suffered from a turnover, if you survive. If backing out a tractor is not possible, use another tractor to pull the stuck tractor free. Always make sure the chain is hitched to the drawbar of the pulling tractor. Never place boards in front of the tractor wheels or attempt to move the tractor forward by its own power.

Operating on unlevel ground can change the tractor's center of gravity, making it easier to turnover. Mounted equipment, especially if the equipment is not mounted as directed by the tractor manufacturer, will also shift the center of gravity.

Always keep front-end loader equipment in the lowest position possible when in transport. A front-end loader in the raised position, alters the tractor's center of gravity, reducing its stability. Turning too quickly or too sharply may increase the centrifugal force against the tractor and cause it to overturn sideways. Always slow down when turning. (DJ)

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