

Ticks

What you should know about ticks

- One tick species in Ontario is known to carry Lyme disease, the Black Legged Tick (also called a Deer Tick).
- Other tick species in the province may not carry Lyme bacteria, but they can still carry other pathogens that can cause diseases and infections.
- Not every tick carries harmful bacteria or pathogens, but it is still a good idea to consult a health professional if bitten.

Preventing Tick Bites

- Wear long pants, long sleeves and closed toed shoes.
- Tuck your pants into your socks, and your shirt into your pants.
- Stay on a cleared trail if possible.
- Do a thorough check of your clothes and body (including your hair and head) after being outside, especially in wooded areas.
- Shower soon after being outside.
- Be able to identify common Ontario tick species like: the Black Legged Tick, the American Dog Tick, The Brown Dog Tick and The Lone Star Tick (they can all carry harmful pathogens).

Lyme carrying Tick species – The Black Legged Tick



This is an adult female black legged tick she has black legs, and a red and black body. Adult males are similar with bodies that are fully black. Once they have eaten and are full of blood, their bodies are much bigger and look swollen. Picture credit Adam Roscoe.

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/adamroscoe/>

If bitten by a tick

- If the tick is still embedded in your skin, remove it carefully using tweezers. Make sure to grab the head of the tick as close as you can to your skin and pull the tick straight out slowly without twisting it or squeezing it.
- Check to see that no mouth parts of the tick remain in your skin, if there are any still in your skin remove them with tweezers.
- Put the tick in a sealed container to show your health care provider.
- Wash the bite with warm soap and water.
- Consult a health care provider.

Helpful resources about Tick safety

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/lyme-pamphlet.html>

<https://www.ontarioparks.com/parksblog/how-to-protect-yourself-from-ticks/>

Bears



Avoiding Bear encounters

- Be aware when you are outside, scan your surroundings and don't wear head phones while in bear country.
- Make noise so a bear can hear you coming, especially in areas with background white noise like a waterfall or stream.
- Notice any bear signs – fresh bear scats, overturned rocks, claw marks on trees, tracks.

If you encounter a bear

- Make lots of noise (air horn, and whistles are good for this) and slowly back away while keeping the bear in sight.
- Avoid making direct eye contact with the bear.
- Do not run, climb a tree, or swim to get away from a bear.

Precautions you can take

- Bring a buddy with you while you perform citizen science tasks, bears are more intimidated by groups of people (even 2 people), and are more likely to leave you alone if you aren't by yourself.
- Carry an air horn or loud whistle with you to scare off a bear.
- Carry bear spray with you in the rare event that a bear encounter is aggressive and tries to approach you.

This information was sourced from

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/prevent-bear-encounters-bear-wise#section-2>

Poison Ivy



Photo credit Kerry Wixted Flickr.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/kwixted0/>



Photo credit Bob Richmond Flickr.
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How to identify Poison Ivy

- Leaves are grouped in 3 (really one compound leaf with 3 leaflets).
- The two back leaves are asymmetrical with their prominent middle vein being off centre.
- In the summer months you might see small greenish white to yellow flowers, and white round berry-like fruit.

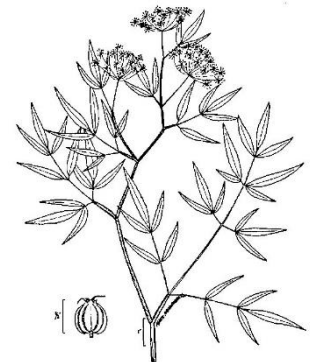
Preventing contact with Poison Ivy

- Wear closed toed shoes and long pants and tuck pants into your socks.
- Stay on a cleared trail if possible.
- Learn how to identify Poison Ivy.
- Avoid touching plants with leaves grouped in three if unsure.

If you come in contact with Poison Ivy

- Wash area with warm water and soap as soon as possible.
- Avoid scratching or touching any irritation (other than to wash it) because this can spread the plant oils and rash to other parts of your body.
- Wash any clothes or tool that could have come in contact with the plant or the rash.

Spotted Water Hemlock - THIS PLANT IS VIOLENTLY POISONOUS



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[Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org](http://bugwood.org)

DA, NRCS. 2020. The PLANTS Database (<http://plants.usda.gov>, 26 March 2020). National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA.

- DO NOT TOUCH THIS PLANT.
- Can reach up to 2 m tall, stems have purple blotches on them.
- Leaves are alternate, pinnately compound and divided 2 or 3 times (see drawing for what this visually looks like).
- Flowers are white in flattened clusters at the top of stems.
- Juices from crushed plant if transferred to mouth from hand can cause symptoms in minutes including: fever, abdominal pain, paralysis, respiratory failure and death.
- Found in marshes, swamps, ditches.

Bulbous Water Hemlock - THIS PLANT IS VIOLENTLY POISONOUS



Photos by [Rob Routledge, Sault College, Bugwood.org](http://bugwood.org)

- DO NOT TOUCH THIS PLANT.
- A delicate small plant reaching up to 50 cm tall.
- Branches are slender and sparse.
- There are tiny bulbs found in the leaf axils – the place where leaves veer off from the branch.
- Flowers are white and form small clusters at the top of stems.
- Has the same toxin as Spotted Water Hemlock, and it causes the same symptoms.
- Found in marshes, swamps, along shores of lakes and streams.

Wild Parsnip – sap can cause rash, burns, blisters



[John Cardina, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org](http://John.Cardina@osu.edu) [Bruce Ackley, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org](http://Bruce.Ackley@osu.edu) [Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org](http://Leslie.J.Mehrhoff@uconn.edu)

- DO NOT TOUCH THIS PLANT.
- This is an invasive species that produces sap that can cause bad burns, rashes or blisters if exposed to sunlight on skin.
- It has yellowish-green flower clusters.
- Grows up to 1.5 m tall.
- Stem is green and smooth with no hairs.
- Leaves are pinnately compound - made up of 2 to 5 pairs of “leaflets” that come off the branch across from one another, and then one leaflet at the end (see middle photo).
- Leaflets are jagged or “toothed.”

Cow Parsnip – sap can cause rash, burns, blisters



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- DO NOT TOUCH THIS PLANT.
- This is a native species that produces sap that can cause bad burns, rashes or blisters if exposed to sunlight on skin.
- Leaves have three lobes (palmately compound), with each lobe sometimes being further lobed, edges are finely toothed (jagged).
- White flowers are in flat clusters at end of branches, clusters 4 – 8 inches wide (smaller than Giant Hogweed).

Giant Hogweed – sap can cause rash, burns, blisters



Thomas B. Denholm, New Jersey
Department of Agriculture, Bugwood.org



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University
of Connecticut, Bugwood.org



USDA APHIS PPQ, Oxford
North Carolina, Bugwood.org

- DO NOT TOUCH THIS PLANT.
- This is another invasive species that produces sap that can cause bad burns, rashes or blisters if exposed to sunlight on skin.
- Can grow up to 15-20 ft tall, hence its descriptor as giant!
- White flowers are found in flat, large clusters at the end of branches (can reach 2.5 ft in diameter!)
- Stem is hollow and often blotched purple with coarse hairs.
- Leaves are large and deeply lobed (see below).



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