

POLICY: Management of Poison Ivy on Monhegan Associates' Trails

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This policy acknowledges that the Monhegan Associates Bylaws are the governing document for all Monhegan Associates activities. With that in mind, this policy supersedes all prior policies or statements specifically related to the contents of this document.

Objective

It is the aim of the Monhegan Associates to preserve the natural state of Monhegan's wildlands while providing the public access to our hiking trails. Where possible, MAI will try to alert the public about potentially unsafe conditions through the use of signs.

To further that aim the Associates may choose, as described below, to advise the public about the existence of Poison Ivy in specific areas on the trails as well as provide tips to help accurately identify Poison Ivy..

In areas where poison ivy is growing in close proximity to the trail and poses a likely risk of exposure to hikers or emergency rescue workers the Associates may choose to engage properly trained staff or other workers or employ a professional service to safely remove and dispose of Poison Ivy.

Definitions

- **Poison Ivy (PI) - 1a** : a climbing plant (*Toxicodendron radicans* synonym *Rhus radicans*) of the cashew family that is especially common in the eastern and central U.S., that has ternate leaves, greenish flowers, and white berries, and that produces an irritating oil causing a usually intensely itching skin rash. **1b** : any of several plants closely related to Poison Ivy

Implementation

Oversight:

- 1) Decisions about where and when to engage volunteers or paid staff to remove *Poison Ivy* are to be made by the Monhegan Associates Wildlands committee.
- 2) All persons chosen for Poison Ivy removal:
 - a) shall perform Poison Ivy removal to the standards of this policy.
 - b) shall be:
 - i) professionally trained and equipped by a qualified agency in the use of equipment and in the process of Poison Ivy removal,
- OR -
 - ii) trained and equipped in the process of removal and disposal of Poison Ivy on Monhegan by the Wildlands Coordinator.
 - c) If the person is not employed by a professional organization, they shall be paid a negotiated wage commensurate with other paid labor of Monhegan Associates with up to a 50% addition for hazard pay.
 - i) They shall be paid the above wage regardless of their association or affiliation with MAI. If the person is already an employee of MAI, they will not be paid for their normal hourly work while being paid for poison Ivy removal. (see Rationale below)
- 3) No casual volunteers shall be allowed to do Poison Ivy removal.
- 4) When Poison Ivy is discovered during the course of voluntary trail clearing, its location should be noted and reported to the leader of the trail clearing crew.
- 5) The Wildlands Committee will arrange for and oversee the removal of Poison Ivy from the trails.
- 6) The Wildlands Committee will arrange for and keep records on any Poison Ivy removal for the purpose of demonstrating the effectiveness of removal efforts.

Trails Signage Construction:

Poison Ivy Signs should adhere to the specifications outlined in the [MAI Signage Policy](#) (also see [Appendix A](#)).

Trails Signage Locations:

- Signs should be placed in areas known to have large amounts of poison ivy in close proximity to the trail where hikers are likely to come into physical contact with the plant.
- See Appendix A for a map of currently known Poison Ivy sign locations (as of 2019). (this will be created and maintained by the Wildlands C.)
- If the Poison Ivy has been appropriately removed per this policy, the sign indicating its presence should be removed. ([See Rationale](#))

Educational Signage

Signs advising island visitors of the existence of Poison Ivy in the wildlands as well as providing information about proper identification should be posted on the Freight Shed, the Rope Shed and on the MAI cart and shared with other island institutions.

- "Signs should be at least 8.5" x 11," laminated, and replaced each season.
- See [Appendix A](#) for sample poster
- Updated Poison Ivy locations should be noted on the MAI trail map whenever the map is reprinted.
- Marked up maps showing reasonably current PI location should be posted at the Island Inn, Monhegan House, and Trailing Yew
- The Boat lines serving Monhegan will be requested to advise their passengers that poison ivy is adjacent to the trails from Christmas Cove to White Head

Guidelines for the safe manual removal of Poison Ivy

Personal Safety:

Professional PI removal crews will take responsibility for the appropriate protection gear for their crews.

If the work is being done by other hired by MAI

- 1) Clothing and protective equipment: Persons removing Poison Ivy should wear
 - a. thick rubber gloves or gauntlet leather gloves that can be easily donned and removed without touching the outside surfaces,

- b. goggles,
 - c. a face mask,
 - d. a long-sleeve shirt,
 - e. boots or shoes that can be hosed off with water.
2. As soon as possible clothing should be washed separately from other laundry, and shoes should be cleaned with cold, soapy water and a garden hose.
 3. Cleaning of tools: Tools used for removing poison ivy must be thoroughly cleaned as soon as possible. Pruners and shovels, including the handles, should be wiped down with rubbing alcohol, let dry, and then oiled to prevent rust.
 4. Cleaning of skin: It is advised to use a product like "Tecnu" to wash hands, arms, and other areas within a half hour after Poison Ivy removal work is complete.

Removal Methods:

NOTE: Poison Ivy vines must never be ripped, torn or cut with a "weed wacker" or other mechanical device that thrashes the plant, as these methods can disperse toxic resin into the air.

1. Remove by clipping any foliage that may contact clothing or skin while trying to remove roots.
2. Trace the root of the plant as far as you can by pulling gently on the main stalk to remove as much of the root as possible. Pull on the exposed root until it breaks as far from the trail as possible
3. Dig out the roots if possible: Note: digging the plant out by the roots should only be done in areas with significant soil depth and where such activity will minimally impact other plants.
4. Remove all debris from the removal to a place at least four (4) feet away from the trail. Try to leave the roots unexposed to the ground.
5. Inspect the area: Be sure there is no Poison Ivy debris on the ground or near the trail that may come into contact with future hikers.

Internal References

These internal references are among the Monhegan Associates' documents that have been consulted when writing this policy:

[Monhegan Associates Web Page](#)

Certificate of Organization, Monhegan Associates Bylaws:

<http://monheganassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/bylaws2008-complete.pdf>

Monhegan Associates Herbicide Usage Policy

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https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NmRrjL9l8aTD0e946zGPnvg6Q_XJ8dQgWs1vpfi ePTA/edit?usp=sharing

Monhegan Associates Signage Policy

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10VJTGM2M-dbsZPH3Intyr5VEqJcSLhRLz914Mx Mt_k8/edit

List of list of MAI substantive motions authored by Clare Durst 2019.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1fuQeGEk0cVRJjZbdoh223FpAfgeFmbID/view>

External References

These external references were among other documents that were considered when writing this policy:

Poison Ivy Definition

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/poison%20ivy>

State of Maine Poison Ivy Fact Sheet

<https://www.maine.gov/dacf/php/gotpests/weeds/poison-ivy.htm>

General Poison Ivy Information

<https://www.poison-ivy.org/>

Article containing information about manual poison ivy removal method safety

<https://www.thespruce.com/tips-for-removing-poison-ivy-safely-2132618>

Maine Natural Areas Program article about Non-Herbicide or Herbicide-Plus Invasive Plant Control

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/mnap/features/invasive_plants/nonherbicide.html

Rationale

The spraying of herbicides was used prior to 2013 to control Poison Ivy. It was discussed and considered but decided by a unanimous vote in August of 2013 the board of trustees to discontinue use of herbicides and pesticides on Monhegan Associates

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owned land and use natural solutions for invasive and poison ivy control. In 2020 a formal policy outlining the ban of herbicide use in the wildlands was voted on and approved by the board of trustees.. (See internal References above)

Hazardous Removal Pay

Because the removal of Poison Ivy is considered hazardous, any person engaging in this activity should be paid for the work regardless of their affiliation with MAI, including MAI workers, Trustees, or officers.

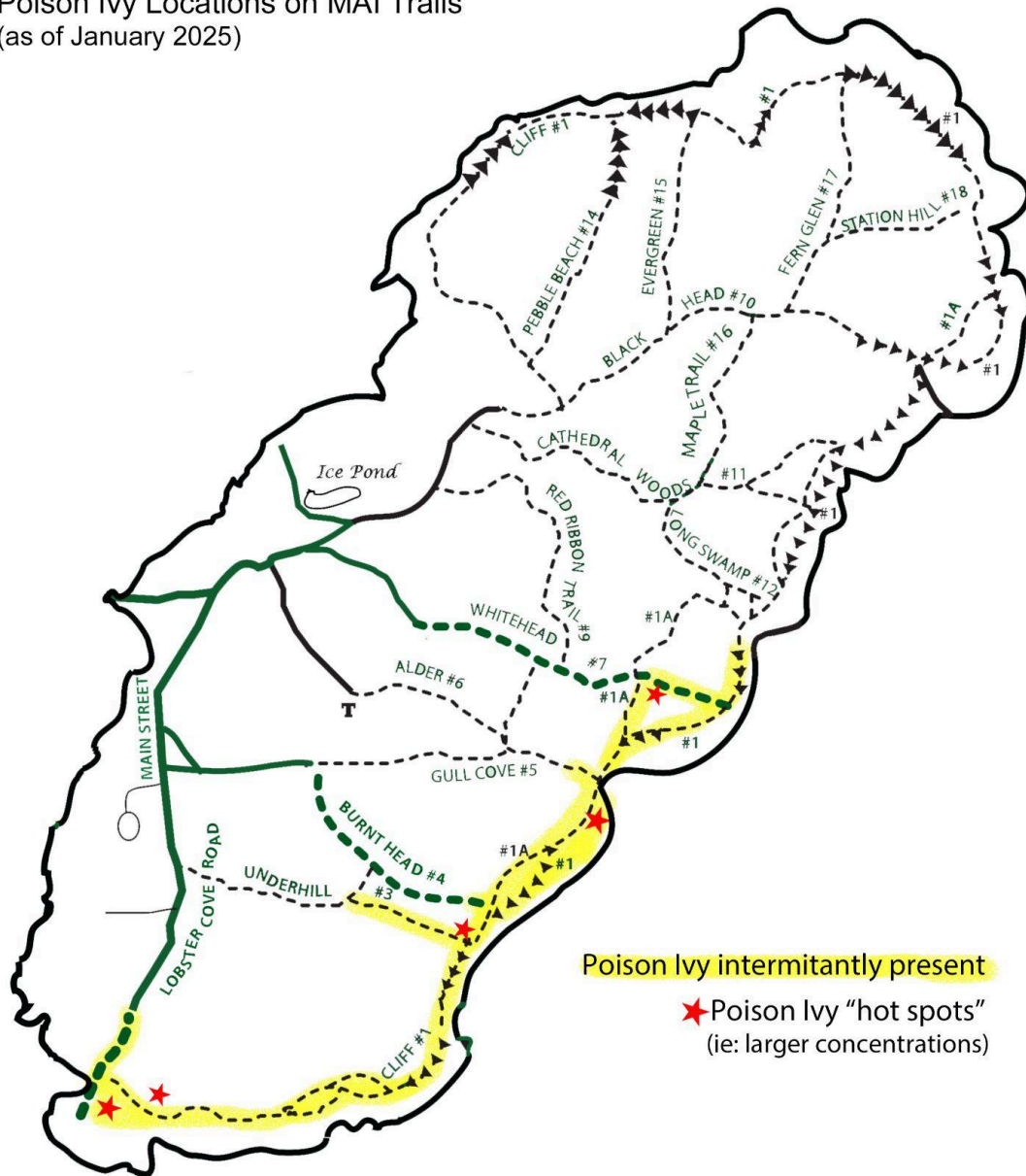
Poison Ivy Sign Removal

Poison Ivy signs should be put out by the Wildlands committee in its trail clearing efforts. If the hazard is removed to this policy, the presence of the plant no longer threatens hikers and the sign should be removed. There is some sentiment that warning people when the threat has been mitigated and no longer exists is not appropriate.

APPENDIX A

Monhegan Associates, Inc.

Poison Ivy Locations on MAI Trails
(as of January 2025)





How to Identify Poison Ivy

by treksinthewild.com

"Leaves of three, let it be."
 This old rhyme refers to the grouping of three leaves that are most commonly associated with poison ivy. Though there are many other plants with three predominate leaves, this can be a good starting point for identification.

"Hairy vine, no friend of mine." & "Raggy rope, don't be a dope!"
 Poison ivy vines on trees have a furry "raggy" appearance. These rhymes warn tree climbers to be wary. Old, mature vines on tree trunks can be quite large and long, with the recognizable leaves obscured among the higher foliage of the tree.

"Berries white, run in fright" & "Berries white, danger in sight."
 The berry-like fruit, a drupe, mature by August to November with a grayish-white colour. Fruits are a favorite winter food of some birds and other animals. Seeds are spread mainly by animals and remain viable after passing through the digestive tract.

"Longer middle stem, stay away from them."
 This refers to the middle leaflet having a notably longer stem than the two side leaflets and is a key to differentiating it from the similar-looking *Rhus aromatica* - Fragrant sumac.

"Red leaflets in the spring, it's a dangerous thing."
 Sometimes in the spring new leaflets have a red appearance. (Note that later, in the summer, the leaflets are green, making them more difficult to distinguish from other plants, while in autumn they can be reddish-orange.)

"Side leaflets like mittens, will itch like the dickens."
 This refers to the appearance of some, but not all, poison ivy leaves, where each of the two side leaflets has a small notch that makes the leaflet look like a mitten with a "thumb."

"If butterflies land there, don't put your hand there."
 Some butterflies land on poison ivy, since they are not affected, which provides them protection as their predators avoid eating the plant.

Poison Ivy is present on the lands and trails owned and managed by the Monhegan Associates (MAI). While it is often much maligned due to the risk it can present to some, it is native to Monhegan and an important food source for birds during their fall migration and throughout the winter. MAI does attempt, when possible, to address Poison Ivy in a limited way in areas where it poses a potential hazard along marked trails.

We are deeply committed to protecting the environmental balance of our wildlands by abstaining from the use of herbicides. All clearing of Poison Ivy must be done by hand and therefore, as a primarily volunteer-led organization, total eradication of all Poison Ivy along the trails is not possible.

We strongly recommend visitors enjoying our trails wear appropriate clothing and footwear, stay on marked trails, respect Monhegan's leash laws by keeping pets with you and on the trails at all times, and be well informed about how to accurately identify this plant.



Poison Ivy is most commonly present on the south end of Monhegan Island, on the trails highlighted in yellow.

Not sure if it's Poison Ivy? We highly recommend downloading the Seek app by iNaturalist; a great tool for learning about Poison Ivy and other plants you see out on the trails.



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