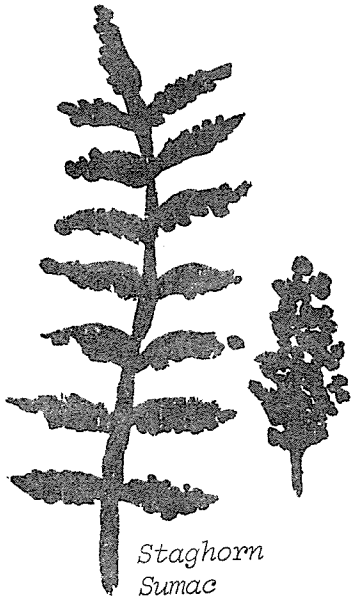


THE ILLINOIS PRAIRIE PATH NEWSLETTER
FALL 1971

WHAT TO SEE

What do you know about plants poisonous to touch?

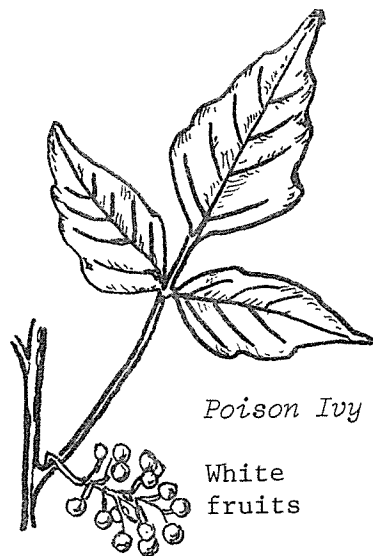
- A. The sumac tree that grows along the Path is not poisonous? True False
- B. Most of the vines, common along the Path, that exhibit brilliant red fall color are poison ivy? True False



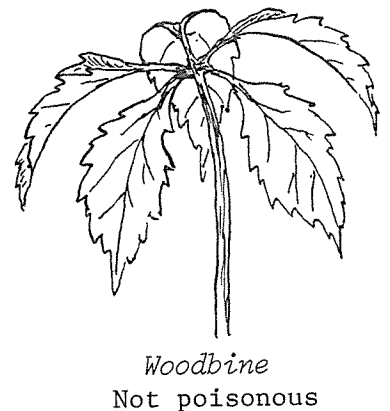
A. The *staghorn sumac*, very common along the Path, is spectacular in fall with crimson or scarlet leaves and upright clusters of red "berries". It is NOT *poison sumac*. Staghorn sumac grows in dry areas -- poison sumac only in the boggy wet. Staghorn sumac has upright red fruits -- poison sumac has drooping ivory-colored "berries". One leaf of staghorn sumac has 11 to 31 toothed leaflets -- poison sumac has 7 to 13 smooth-edged shiny leaflets. Both have brilliant fall color. There are no known plants of poison sumac in DuPage County.

B. Unfortunately there are sections of the Path where *poison ivy* is found and it may grow as a vine, climbing over fences and up trees. It may also be a low shrub. It is often confused with *boxelder* seedling trees. Their leaves, with three leaflets, are similar; but poison ivy has alternate leaves whereas the leaves of boxelder are opposite. They do not turn red in the fall. Poison ivy is also confused with *woodbine* since both have brilliant fall coloring. But poison ivy leaves have 3 leaflets and woodbine leaves have five. Woodbine is prolific along much of the Path and enhances the fall color display.

How did you do with your test? A. True. B. False.



The pioneers found several uses for staghorn sumac. Seaton says they made black ink by boiling down the leaves and fruit with a bit of iron. *It works!* The original of the illustration of staghorn sumac on this page was drawn with sumac ink! The plant contains tannin and was used for tanning leather. The stems, with pith pushed out, were sometimes used as pipes to collect maple sap. Stuart Edward White said they made good "persuader" pipes to blow on campfire coals. The tart red fruits placed on the tongue are helpful in quenching thirst and are known as Indian lemonade.



THE ANNUAL MEETING

will be held as usual on the first Sunday in November. It will take place at 2:00 p.m., November 7 in the Thornhill Building of *The Morton Arboretum*. You will be sent a separate notice; this is just to remind you to save the date.

FALL WALKS

Last month *Norman Reeder*, a retired *Farm Journal* editor of Grand Lake, Michigan, explored our Path by bicycle and on foot. In thanking us he wrote "I only wish that we had a facility like this near us." As I check our calendar of walks, I realize what good use is being made of our "facility." First, there was the Members' Walk led by *Jon Duerr* and *Bill Masters*; in spite of the chilly wet weather about 60 people walked a section near Batavia, a part of the old right-of-way in Kane County. As usual, there are many guided walks scheduled for October: the Prairie Path Annual Walk to which the public is invited on October 16 -- meet at Weisbrook Road, about 1/2 mile north of Butterfield Road at 10:00 a.m.; a walk for members of *The Nat'l. Assn. of Biology Teachers* on October 13 -- their annual convention is in Chicago and they selected the Prairie Path for a field trip; the *Naperville AAUW* with a family walk on the Path on October 17; conducted walks for Scouts -- for example, one on October 19 for *Mrs. King's Brownies*; and there will be a long hike on Sunday, November 14, sponsored by the Prairie Path and led by Bob Irwin. This one will be a fast walk of 8 or 10 miles; time and place of meeting to be announced.

GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS GOOD NEWS

On October 14, following a celebration lunch at the Ramada Inn to be attended by Illinois Department of Conservation Director *Henry Barkausen* and members of the *DuKane Council*, there will be a ceremonial ribbon-cutting to mark the addition to the Path of the Kane County portions of the C.A. & E. right-of-way, just purchased by the state!

National Trail designation of the section of the Path from Elmhurst to Wheaton has been approved. The majority of the Path is now in the National Trail System, and we expect to hold a formal dedication later this fall.

Due to the efforts of *Phoebe Ryerson*, an agreement has been reached with *Northern Illinois Gas Co.* giving us the right to develop a 10-foot wide path along the north side of the toll road to connect the Aurora branch at the toll road overpass with the isolated Batavia branch west of Eola Road. The break in the continuity of the Batavia line by the construction of the toll road has been a real problem and we are most appreciative of this generous offer by Northern Illinois Gas to let us all use their land.

Two more sections of the Path have been surfaced for walking. The *Schless Construction Co.* of Wayne has laid limestone siftings between Winfield Road and the West DuPage River near Warrenville, and from Oak Meadows to Wayne, with the exception of a small piece south of the E.J. & E. tracks. When this last piece is finished, the entire northwest leg of the Path in DuPage County will be completed.

Jaycee chapters are setting up trash collection baskets in Wheaton and Elmhurst.

Did you see the Prairie Path display at Carson Pirie Scott in Yorktown on August 27-29? All arrangements for this booth were made by the Wheaton Friends of the Prairie Path.

PUBLICATIONS

There have been several articles about the Path in print this summer:

A chapter in *Open Land in Urban Illinois*, by Rutherford Platt.

A separate brochure devoted to the Path, issued by Commonwealth Edison.

An article in *Outdoor Recreation Report #20*, published by Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Department of the Interior, Washington.

Editor - Helen Turner