

## Anacardiaceae

### cashew family

Mostly tropical, the family includes nearly 600 species; four species are native to Nova Scotia. Leaflets are pinnately or palmately compound. Typical are small, regular flowers, five-merous and usually unisexual. Petals are distinct and alternating with the stamens. Fruits are single-seeded drupes. Resin-ducts are present and well-developed, the latex often irritating.

#### Key to genera

Inflorescence terminal, dense cluster of flowers; fruits red, glandular-pubescent.

*Rhus*

Inflorescence axillary, loose clusters; fruits white or yellow, smooth or puberulent.

*Toxicodendron*

### ***Rhus* L.**

#### **sumac**

A cosmopolitan genus of 100 species of trees or shrubs, we have but one species. Inflorescence is a tightly-packed pyramidal cluster on older branches and twigs. Petals are often pubescent on the inner surface. Ovary is split into three carpels, in one locule. Fruit is red and covered with glandular pubescence.

#### ***Rhus typhina* L.**

#### **Staghorn Sumac; sumac vinaigrier**



*Photo by Sean Blaney*

A tall colonial shrub, it produces pinnate leaves, with at least nine serrate leaflets. Young wood is often velutinous. Fruits are markedly glandular, born in erect triangular panicles.

Flowers in June and July.

Usually found along roadsides, in fields or forest edges,



Photo by Alain Belliveau

usually on rocky soils.

Common and abundant in southwestern countries, less so northward.

NS to ON, south to UT, KS and GA.

### ***Toxicodendron* Miller**

A genus of Asia and the Americas. Most species cause allergic reactions upon contact. The flowers have glabrous petals and are borne in a racemiform inflorescences arising from the leaf axils. These are often lax in fruit. Drupes range from white to greenish yellow, smooth and shiny or darkly puberulent.

#### Key to species

- |  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| A. Leaflets entire, 7–13.  | <i>Toxicodendron vernix</i> |
| aa. Leaflets 3, entire to barely toothed or lobed.                                   | B                           |
| B. Ascending shrubs, simple or with few branches, not climbing; aerial roots absent. | <i>T. rydbergii</i>         |
| bb. Vining, climbing or creeping; aerial roots present.                              | <i>T. radicans</i>          |

***Toxicodendron radicans* (L.) Kuntz**  
**Poison Ivy; herbe à puce de l'Est**



*Photo by Martin Thomas*



*Photo by Martin Thomas*



A woody vine, its aerial roots are prominent. The three leaflets are mostly flat and ovate, smooth on the margins or with an irregular tooth. The terminal leaflet is long-petiolate; lateral ones are short-petiolate.

Flowers late June into July.

Usually found in low-lying areas, in thickets along stream and lakeshores.

Common in Digby and Yarmouth counties, becoming less frequent eastward.

Ranges from NS to ON, south to the Gulf of Mexico. Eastern.

NOTES: Contact dermatitis may result from handling any part of the plant at any time. Inhalation of the smoke while burning it can cause permanent lung damage.

***Toxicodendron rydbergii* (Small) Greene**  
**Western Poison Ivy; herbe à puce de Rydberg**



*Photo by David Mazerolle*

Leaves are broadly ovate, with noticeably toothed margins and often folded along the costa. Fruits are round and glabrous. An erect or ascending shrub, it generally forms large colonies.

Flowers during July.

Stony, rocky woods and along talus slopes, peat bogs and often in calcareous soils; stony or sandy beaches.



Photo by Sean Blaney

Scattered throughout Nova Scotia, but rarely common.

Found across Canada, south to AZ, TX and NC Absent from the eastern Gulf States and CA.

NOTES: Contact dermatitis may result from handling any part of the plant at any time. Inhalation of the smoke while burning it can cause permanent lung damage.



***Toxicodendron vernix* (L.) Kuntze**

**Poison Sumac; sumac à vernis**



Photo by David Mazerolle

Differs from poison ivy in the number of leaflets, 7–13. They may be oblong, elliptic or obovate, and always entire. Stems and petioles are glabrous. Fruits are pale green and persistent.

Flowers from May to July.

Usually found in swampy or marshy habitats.



Photo by Sean Blaney

So far as known, limited to Telfer Lake and Apple Tree Lake, both in Queens Co.

Ranges from NS to ON, south MN, TX and FL.

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