

Is That So?

By OLGA BURNS

There are cases of people getting poison ivy poisoning simply by touching a piece of imported Japanese black-lacquered wood.

Here's how it happened. An essential ingredient for Japanese black lacquer comes from the Japanese lacquer - tree. That tree is a member of the same family as poison ivy or poison oak, and it contains the same poisonous substance known as urushiol, a rather yellowish oil.

Under certain circumstances, that oily substance, though volatile, has been retained in the lacquer. Hence



poisoning was possible for an extremely susceptible person.

But remarkable as that is, it isn't much more so than cases of poisoning that have occurred when people have handled specimens of poison ivy after they have lain for years in a herbarium.

That has happened to people who thought they were immune, and the reason is that immunity is apparently strictly relative and comparative. In other words, you may be immune for years and suddenly discover - painfully - that you are no longer.

What seems most probable is that no one is actually immune at any time, but that some people at times receive the poison through their skin faster than at others. In any case, there is no question that the best thing to do is to avoid the plant as much as possible.

Advice Timely

That advice is particularly timely now when the leaves of poison oak and ivy are taking on some of the most beautiful autumnal shades of red and orange. You are likely to see them almost anywhere in the country, creeping here and there along the ground, or threading a wall or fence with vivid color. Sometimes, even, you will see them intertwining a tree trunk, their woody vines having a thickness of three or four inches where they plunge into the earth.

Unfortunately, the poison sumac - to give this plant another name - seems to have the ability to make its leaves imitate the shape of others, even the elm. There is an infallible way, however, to avoid this deception. It is as simple as this.

Don't touch the leaves of any plant if the stem ends in a leaf and has two others on opposite sides of the stem and a little way down. Regardless of the color or shape of the leaves, you may get poison oak if you touch them.

(Released by McClure Newspaper Syndicate)

Free: By special arrangement with the editors of the Encyclopedia Americana, my panel of judges will award each week to the reader who sends me the best true-life nature adventure, the best nature observation, or the best question on nature and wildlife, a 30-volume set of this world-famous reference work in a handsome Sealcraft binding. Each week new submissions will be considered. Sorry, I simply can't answer your many friendly letters. Please address your letter to: Is That So? c/o Medford Mail Tribune, Box 1069, San Francisco, Calif.

American Children In European Classes

Karlsruhe, Germany - (UPI) - More than 55,000 American children - almost as many as go to public school in Cleveland, Ohio - are attending classes run by the U.S. Army in Europe this fall, an increase of 16 per cent over last year. The pupils are dependents of GI's stationed abroad.

The schools, scattered throughout West Germany, France and other countries where American military forces are based, are manned by about 2,100 teachers, of whom 800 are serving abroad for the first time.

About one-fourth of the teachers must be replaced annually, because many take only a one-year leave of absence from their regular schools to go abroad.

BAN ELECTRIC HEATING Berlin - (UPI) - The Communist East German construction industry has banned installation of electric heaters, electric heating and infrared heating for homes and public buildings in a move to save electric energy.

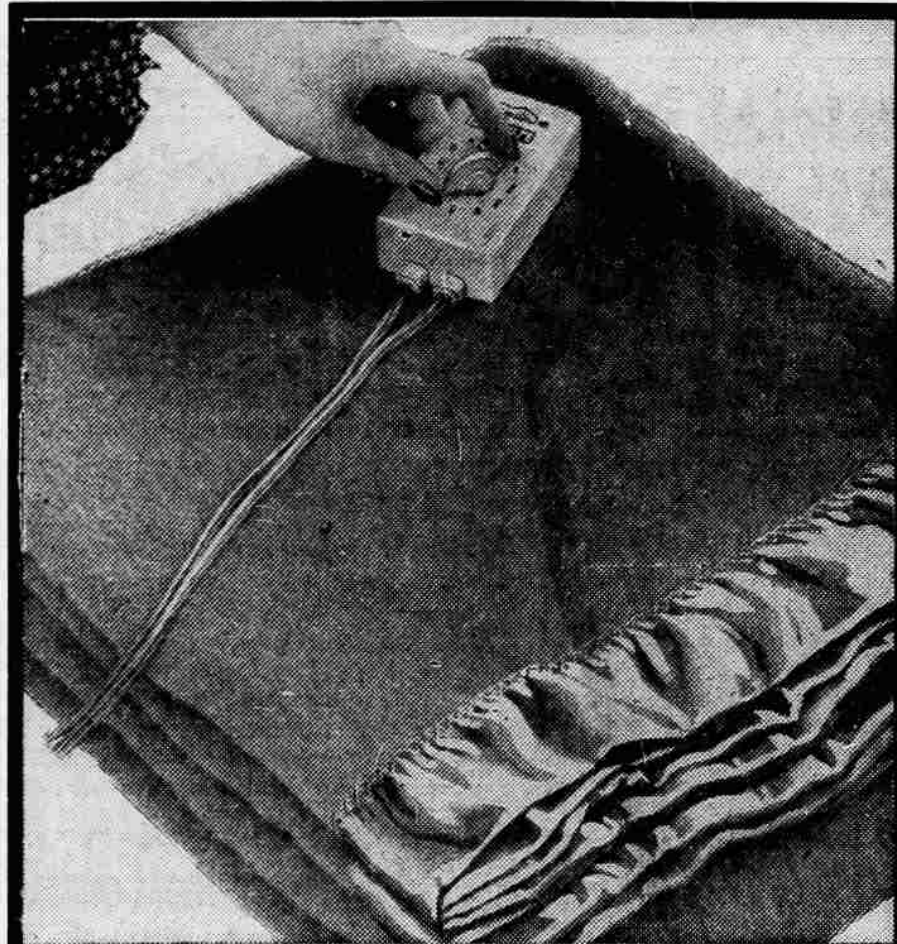
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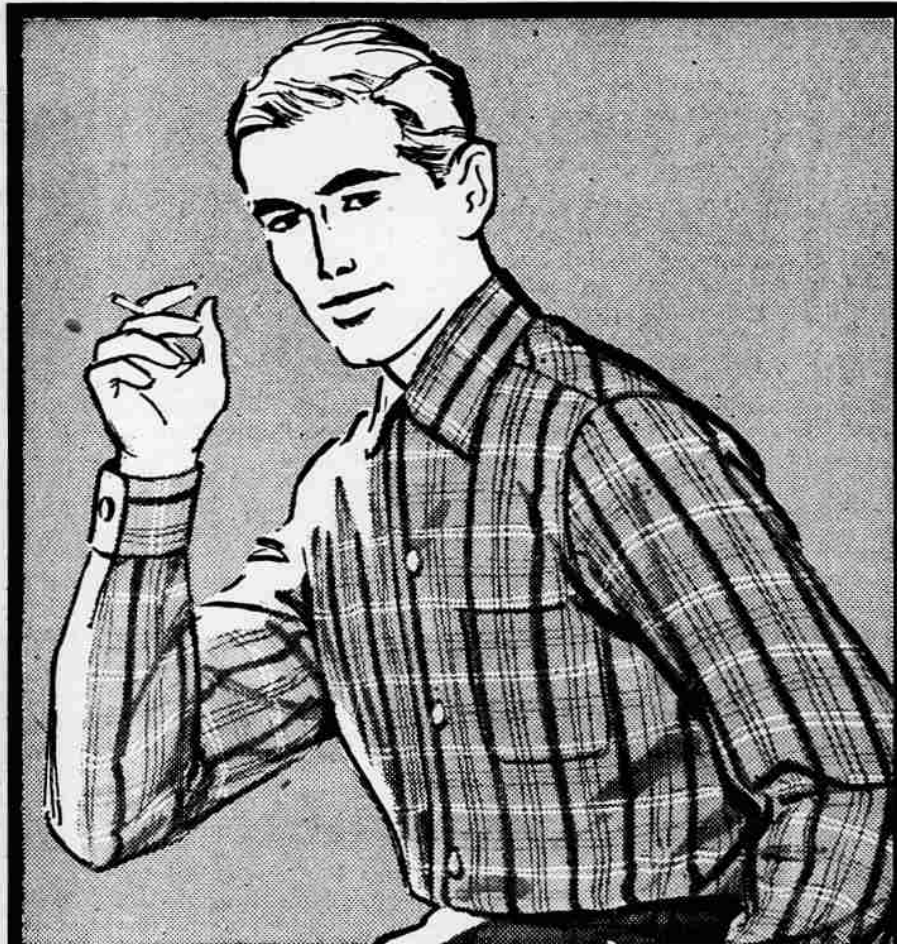


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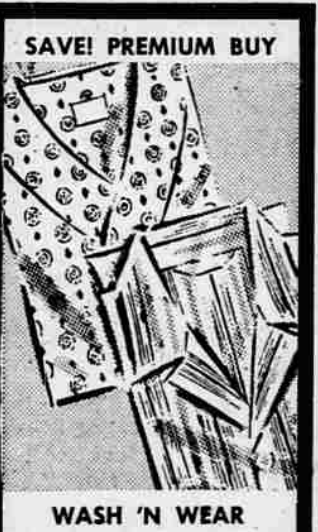
Machine washable fleecy nylon reverses to beautiful taffeta. 5 beautiful color combinations. Long wearing durable warm. Boys' sizes 4-18... 9.95



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