



## Poison Ivy - A Growing Problem

Poison ivy is a particular problem this year. An extremely wet spring and very dry summer so far are the perfect conditions for poison ivy, which is drought tolerant. If you love gardening and the smell of fresh soil and mulch, watching poison ivy rash spread up your arms is both disconcerting and irritating.

This North American native plant can take several forms, as ground cover, a free standing bush or a climbing vine. All parts of the plant can cause a skin rash when the active oils, Urushiol, come in contact with your skin. Many people are not allergic to this oil, but if you are, look out. It takes only one billionth of a gram to cause blistering skin. The oil itself has a long shelf life, up to five years, and is easily transferred from surface to surface.

Poison ivy can take several sizes, shapes and colors, but in most cases, it has

three shiny leaves attached to a wood stem, and of course, it has an ivy appearance. During the spring, it has a small cluster of white flowers and in the fall, white berries develop which can hang on the ends of the plant for most of the winter.

The best protection is avoidance. Wear protective clothing, gloves and some experts recommend wearing a mask. Remove as much of the plant as possible, dig up the roots, bag everything, and throw the bag in the trash. Never burn it, as the smoke can cause severe lung damage.

Poison ivy can be happy and vigorous growers in many garden environments, so vigilance is the key. Take care and avoid this nasty invader of your garden.

### FROM THE DESK OF ARTHUR S. LAZEROW

#### CONGRATULATIONS, REALTORS!

June was a milestone month for Alban and our thanks go to the many Realtors who have Alban Inspections on their radar screens. **Alban inspectors performed over 100 inspections in June!**

Our records show that it has been several years since we achieved this level. The fast market developed several years ago when multiple offers and fear of proposing contingencies significantly reduced the number of home inspections throughout our market area. The flip side, of course, has been the current recession, which has also affected everyone associated with real estate, from appraisers to title companies.

There are currently 1,100 Realtors on our active list. Many of the Realtors who scheduled home inspections were friends we had not heard from for months and several scheduled multiple home inspections. This is very encouraging and we believe sets the pace for the remainder of 2009, as the shock of the near financial collapse of the American economy recedes and a more encouraging mind set settles into people's heads and hearts. All of us at Alban Inspections wish good fortune and better days to everyone in the real estate industry.

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FROM JOE DEMPSEY, ASHI ASSOCIATE INSPECTOR & ALBAN CHIEF HOME ENERGY AUDITOR

## Energy Industry Update - A National Coup

As Chief Operating Officer of both Home Energy Team (HET) and its education arm, Home Energy Team Institute, Art Lazerow, Alban Inspections president, achieved a triple first-in-the-nation coup this summer. When RESNET, the premier energy auditor certification organization, issued its enabling regulations for certification of Home Energy Survey Professionals (HESP), an existing-home auditor specialist, HET Institute filed its application for approval to provide this certification on behalf of RESNET and was the first organization in the nation to be approved.

During June, HET Institute conducted the first full training of 28 candidates for

certification as Home Energy Survey Professionals, with 26 of the students, mostly local Maryland home inspectors, successfully passing the rigorous RESNET exam. Then just a week ago, HET Institute granted the nation's first certification as a Home Energy Survey Professional.

The benefit to homeowners in our region and to local Realtors and their clients is that, as home energy audits become more common, there will be numerous fully trained home energy auditors available to conduct these energy efficiency inspections, and that will keep prices competitive.

**Weekend Scheduling Now Available! Call 1-800-822-7200 and leave a message.** The Professional Development Institute and Camelot Real Estate Academy are proud to offer continuing education courses taught by Alban Inspectors in Real Estate Offices! Call Tina for more information to schedule one of these educational seminars, or to schedule one of our many services at 800-822-7200 or 301-662-6565.

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