

Homeopathic Treatment of Poison Oak

Treating poison oak homeopathically is much the same as treating anything with homeopathic remedies. The goal is to match the symptoms of the rash with the symptoms of the remedies. Aside from having a well developed materia medica, understanding the case clearly and correctly is the most important part of the process.

To facilitate this process of understanding the materia medica, I have organized the relevant remedies into a hierarchy. The first five remedies--Anacardium, Croton tiglium, Graphites, Rhus tox, and Sulphur--are essentially "rhus polycrests." There are also smaller remedies which are useful: Agaricus, Apis, Anagallis, Bryonia, Rhus diversiloba, Sepia. The seldom used remedies include Ammonium- carb., Arnica, Arsenicum, Cuprum, Echinacea, Grindelia, Kali-sulph, Ledum, Lobelia, Mercurius, Mezerium, Nuph:ar , Plantago, Pulsatilla, Rannunculus-b, Rhus-radicans, Rhus-venanatta Sanguinaria, Xerophyllum, and Zinc.

Taking the case involves considering appearance, severity of the rash, severity of the itching, discharge, sensations, the affects of scratching, ameliorations or aggravations, general affects on the person, previous history and previous intervention that may have changed the appearance or course of the case.

Potency: the most appropriate prescribing requires matching the potency to the case. The main considerations for potency are: clarity of symptoms for a remedy, and the severity of symptoms. A clear severe case will greatly benefit from a 1M potency, or 200C at least once a day. On the other hand, a mild case can take 12C every 2 hours or 30C a few times a day.

After giving the remedy, if there is improvement, the most useful instruction for the patient is to wait until it seems necessary to repeat. In other words, see how long the remedy works, then repeat. With a lower potency, repetition will be necessary more often. If the remedy makes the rash worse, stop taking it.

Key Indications for the five most used poison ivy remedies:

Anacardium: Swelling; red areola around pustules, intense itching, < scratching, left side. Yellow or clear discharge affects the anywhere but the neck especially. < hot water, warmth of bed, night, scratching. > rubbing. Generally averse to work, depressed, anxious dreams, and sleepless.

Crot-tig: Pustules which dry into yellow scabs, plastic exudation, oozing yellowish serum leads to thick scabs, feels "hidebound", > after sleep. Variable appearance. feels tight all over. itch at first tingling or stinging, later burning. Scalp- especially on face around eyes. genitals. < left side, < touch, night, morning, washing.
> gentle rubbing, itching: < night, AM, washing, hot water, > after sleep, scratching is painful. Generally turmoil in nervous system; impossible to bear, can't stand it, flipping out.

Graphities: Glutinous, sticky, honey-like after scratching, yellow, corrosive, bends of joints, covered parts. Appears dry, crusty, rough skin, thick skin, cracking with or without discharge. Scalp, face, bends of joints, folds of skin, covered parts, groin, neck behind ears. < at night, evening, warmth at night, cold, wet.
> tearing the flesh or hard rubbing, burns and throbs after scratching. scratches till raw, mentally dull, "thick."

Rhus-tox: Vesicles in a line of the scratch, angry looking skin. > warm applications, hot water. Eyes swollen shut, penis unable to void. Thin yellow discharge. intense itching, stinging, burning (like fire). Face, eyes, palms of hands, genitals. < night, warmth of bed, air. Itching > after scalding hot water. After scratching: crusty, pustules, vesicles burning. Itching < after scratching. Vesicles in a line of the scratch, mentally restless, stiff, irritable.

Sulphur: < warmth of bed, scratching, washing, bathing, dry crusty pustules, scratching till bleeding. Variable appearance, or discharge. Swollen face, scalp, < left-sided < warmth of bed, scratching, washing, bathing. < getting warm, 11 AM, night.
Itching > scratching, but followed by smarting, scratching till bleeding.

Key Indications for the larger of the smaller remedies.

Agaricus : Red swelling, miliary eruption, circumscribed eruption. Burning, itching. Chilblains remedy, coldness in spots. < open air, after eating, *coition*, < before a thunderstorm.
> moving about slowly.

Anagallis: Vesicles in groups, bran like, ring-shaped tetter, dry, rough. Eruptions come out and desquamate. When it begins to heal, then a new crop of eruptions come out. Itching, tingling, tightness in forehead. Worse hand, fingers, palms. Tightness in forehead and skin. < touch. exhilaration and activities of the mind, hilarity. Trembling.

Apis : Baggy swelling, fluid filled, red. intolerance of heat. Face, eyes, and hands.

Bryonia: Hot pale skin, red elevated rash, hard shiny swelling, dry. Itching, stitching, aching, burning. Face, hands, hips, thighs, joints, < right side. Itching > heat of bed when pimples raised, < after sweating, walking fast. < warmth, AM, right side. > cool bath, light pressure. Oversensitiveness, slow onset, < right side. thirsty!! < motion.

Rhus div: Eruption like chicken pox, papular on red edematous base. Much swelling of face, hands, genitals. Heat, frightful itching, burning. Irritability of the skin. Scrotum, thighs, hairy parts, face. Left eye closed with swelling, right partly closed. Itching > cold, < heat, warmth, < scratching or rubbing. Extreme languor, nervous weakness. Tired from least effort. Can reoccur 5 months to a year later.

Sepia: Vesicles on an acrid base. Itching. Face, arms, hands, back, hips, genitals, scalp. Bends of joints, elbows and knees. Left sided. < open air, cold, air, afternoon, evening. > heat, warmth of bed, scratching. Scratching leads to burning, leads to moistness which forms thin easily picked-off scabs. > exercise, warmth of bed, hot applications. < cold air, after sweat.