

## P E R S P E C T I V E S

*I'm ranting and raving because I've been felled by an itch. Poison oak, poison ivy or poison sumac – whatever it was that was growing in my backyard as I was clearing the brush, I got it. And it itches. Still.*

*My sons have always been very sensitive to this vile and heinous group of vines and plants. My husband and I seemed to be immune to them. Until two weeks ago.*

*My mother would say, "Now in Lithuania, this type of plant never existed. We never came out of the woods with an itch, just a basket of beautiful baravykai – mushrooms."*

*Why this poisonous weed doesn't thrive in Lithuania is really beyond my limited horticultural knowledge. My husband, who still has not experienced the wonders of the ivy, says that it doesn't grow in Lithuania due to the latitude and colder climate. Maybe because there were so many human adversaries to the Lithuanian people, Mother Nature looked kindly upon our people. Or maybe the vaidilutes, the nature worshippers, and the farmers who lived harmoniously with the land helped bless the vast green stretches of woods and fields with only life-sustaining and beneficial plants*

*I could go on and nonsensically theorize. Yet, my cousins in Lithuania will still look at me as if I've made up this fantastic story when I warn them about not wandering into the four feet of my "woods" for fear of the evil poison ivy plants. They'll never understand until they wake up with the skin-ripping itch.*

*The joys of gardening will never be the same for me again. Oh, to be in Lithuania with a simple basket on my arms filled with plump baravykai, instead of this red, incessant itch. Hopefully, when the itch ceases, my normal disposition will return. So will my normal sense of humor.*

*Rasa Ardys-Juška*

Editor

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