100th ANNIVERSARY BANQUET

Mark your calendar, and then hold open the date of October 13, a Monday. That is when the Botanical Society will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary with a gala banquet.

"WONDERFUL WILDFLOWERS" CONTINUES

The exhibition WONDERFUL WILDFLOWERS: BOTANICAL WATERCOLORS BY ANDREY AVINOFF continues at Carnegie Museum of Natural History. It will run until the end of the year. However, there are two phases of prints on view. First 25 watercolors will be displayed through August 20; the second set of 25 through December 31. So, see it now, then see it again after August 20.

PODSPHYLLUM PELTATUM

According to an article in Insight magazine, the drug etoposide, derived from mayapple, has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use on certain forms of cancer.

POISON IVY, OAK, AND SUMAC

Poison ivy is found in most of the US, relatively rare poison sumac in the East & poison oak in the West (there is a SE species of poison oak). All parts of US contain poison ivy or poison oak except Hawaii, Alaska and some of Nev. These plants are native to US, Asia & Central Am. & practically unknown in rest of world. In the last century some English visitors, amazed at the beautiful fall colors of poison ivy, took some home & since it was an "ivy" planted it. Shortly after, a British medical journal reported a new disease contracted only by women who did the gardening & concluded that it was a "hysterical rash".

These plants are not related to Ivy or Oak but are members of cashew family.

At least 110 million Americans are sensitive to chemicals contained in these plants - a heavy oil called urushiol (oo~R00-she-ol). Botanists have developed rash from plant specimens 100 yrs old & from a Chinese jar 1000 yrs old.

A skin test for determining sensitivity to urushiol has now been developed - the principle is similar to tb test. A poison ivy vaccine has now been developed that desensitizes animals & is being developed for humans. A cream has been developed that shields the skin from urushiol, similar to sun-tan cream.

Two things are for sure - a person who has never suffered the rash cannot say they will never get it. Also, any treatment developed will be better than the cures used in the past - bathing in horse urine, or bleach, cleaning the skin with gasoline, morphine, gunpowder, buttermilk, marshmallows, or strychnine, drinking photographer's hypod i.e. or rubbing on ammonia, mustard, Lysol, hair spray, clear nail polish, meat tenderizer or toothpaste!

(Condensed from Smithsonian by Ede Mock)