

Immunity through Exposure

On Thursday's little road trip deeper into Texas, I spent some time in a park of sorts where I encountered poison ivy for the first time in decades.

When I was a kid I was horribly allergic to the stuff. I would break out just from being around it- and the reaction was painful enough I was very aware of when I was around it to try to avoid any contact with it with my skin or anything I might touch even days later. Yet it always got me. Every time. And considering that I spent almost all of my time in the woods, you can imagine what I went through.

Then when I was 14, I stood by and watched as a neighbor kid took a baseball bat to a thick poison ivy vine on the side of a tree. Stupid me!

The splatter, vapor, or fumes from the vine pretty much covered me and I got the worst case of poison ivy of my life. Then, just as I was getting over it I got chickenpox- and the pox LOVED the fresh, sensitive skin that was the result of the healing poison ivy rash. I became one giant pox, and actually couldn't move one hand because it was a solid scab.

However, after I healed I discovered something nice. I was no longer allergic to poison ivy. Not even a little. It might as well have been spinach. I did careful experimentation until I was sure. Then I made it a habit to expose myself in a major way every chance I got. I never reacted again and eventually moved away from anywhere poison ivy (or its relatives) grew.

I had wondered recently whether my "immunity" had faded over time. But it looks like it hasn't. I waded through thickets of poison ivy Thursday, got it on my skin and clothes, and didn't react even a little.

In the same way, I believe I'm immune to statist thought. It holds no appeal to me. It isn't on my list of possibilities when confronted with a problem. And, living in the modern, politics-twisted world, it is easy to keep being exposed so I know my immunity stays solid.