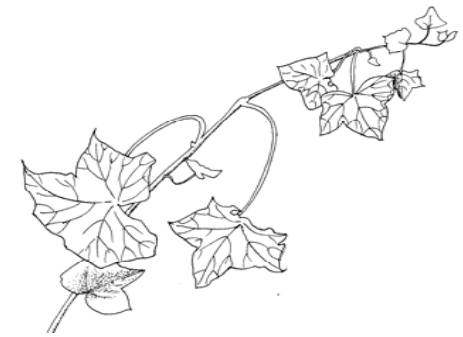


CONTROL

Controlling ivy with herbicide is not very successful because there is a risk of run-off from ivy's waxy leaves onto non-target plants. The most effective control method is **MANUAL** removal. Wear gloves and protective clothing, as sap can cause a reaction in some people. **NOTE:** Remove all cut stems from soil contact.

- Remove accessible flowers or seed heads from vertical growing plants to stop flower production and seed dispersal.
- Hand pull or dig out accessible plants.
- Cut vines or pry them from tree trunks with the aid of a tool at a comfortable height. This will kill upper vines, but the lower, rooted plant needs to be removed.
- Mowing is effective in areas that are mowed regularly. Remove all clippings.
- Mulching- apply an 8" thick mulch layer directly on top of ivy mats to prevent growth. Alternatively, cut or remove ivy first before covering area with an 8" (non-ivy) mulch.
- English ivy clippings will break down to 1/5th of its size when left to dry out and die. Pile ivy and elevate away from soil contact, or turn clippings regularly to keep exposing rootlets to the air. Keep covered with a tarp, or pack in black plastic bags and leave in a sunny spot, rotating to heat all plants.



IVY

When English ivy, *Hedera helix*, escapes from landscaped plantings it often establishes and spreads in shaded forested lands or natural areas. There it can impact all three zones—the forest floor, the shrub layer and the canopy.

DISPOSAL

- From March 1st to November 29th, the municipal recycling program will pick up ivy packed in brown paper bags, and transfer it to an industrial composting system, which attains high enough temperatures to destroy ivy reproduction.
- You may take ivy to the transfer station yourself from December to February.
- **Backyard composting is ineffective** because it doesn't get hot enough to destroy ivy reproduction. Ivy stems will root in other material as it decomposes.

- English ivy reaches the tree canopy and shades out deciduous foliage during summer months, suppressing the host tree.
- Dense ivy cover deprives the bark of normal contact with air and micro-organisms.
- English ivy adds substantial weight to a tree. Mature trees covered with ivy are top-heavy and very likely to blow down.
- English ivy changes the natural succession patterns of forests.
- Ivy limits understorey regeneration by blocking sunlight and shading out native plants..
- Fast growing ivy competes for water and nutrients with native plants.
- Thick ivy mats can accelerate rot and deteriorate structures.

WHAT IS ENGLISH IVY?

This woody, evergreen perennial climbs as a vine or creeps as a shrub. English ivy can photosynthesize year-round, growing for 9-10 months of the year. Older vines may extend over 27 m long with stems reaching 30 cm in diameter. Ivy is long lived with reports of one plant over 400 years old.

Tolerating a wide range of light conditions, ivy is stimulated by as little as 1% light. The entire plant contains slightly toxic compounds. Berries and leaves are toxic to people or livestock if eaten in a large quantity. The sap can cause dermatitis and blistering.

There are two distinct forms and growth stages of English Ivy—the juvenile and mature form.

JUVENILE FORM

- Leaves are deeply 3-5 lobed, light green and alternately arranged.
- Young shoots and leaves are hairy.
- Stems produce adventitious roots at the leaf nodes, which cling to surfaces—they do not penetrate the surface, but help ivy climb.
- Immature plants do not produce any flowers.
- The juvenile stage lasts for about 10 years.



MATURE FORM

- Leaves are unlobed or slightly lobed, dark green and leathery, spirally arranged.
- English ivy matures to produce flowers when it begins to grow vertically.
- Mature plants do not produce adventitious roots.
- The dark coloured drupes (berry-like fruits) mature in the spring.



REPRODUCTION AND DISPERSAL

During the juvenile stage ivy only spreads vegetatively. Any stem fragments in contact with the soil can regenerate growth. Mature plants continue with a slower vegetative spread, but they also produce flowers and fruits and spread by seed. Clusters of small greenish-white flowers are usually produced in the fall.

The fruits are high in fat, and are available in early spring when other food is still scarce. Many birds, including blackbirds, European starlings and American robins disperse the seeds.

IVY CULTIVARS

Over 400 different English ivy cultivars vary in leaf shape, size, colour and growth form.

They are sold as ornamental plants, many of which are considered invasive, and should be avoided as landscape plants in the Pacific Northwest.

A cultivar becomes a **WEED** when:-

- It grows in areas where it was not planted.
- Thick mats or vines inadvertently cover plants, trees or buildings.
- It produces flowers and seeds and spreads rapidly on its own.

PREVENTION

When planting an area, consider alternative ground covers. **Wild strawberries, false lily-of-the-valley, bunchberry, fringe cup, wood sorrel, kinnikinnick, and Oregon grape are good alternatives.** Please contact local nurseries or native plant societies for more suggestions.



Ivy Bulletin, Nov. 2004
English ivy and Irish ivy, *Helix hibernica*, are very similar plants in the Ginseng family (*Araliaceae*), and both are referred to as English ivy in this bulletin.