

If you would like weed identification, site specific control recommendations or additional noxious weed information, contact the San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Program



San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Board 2014

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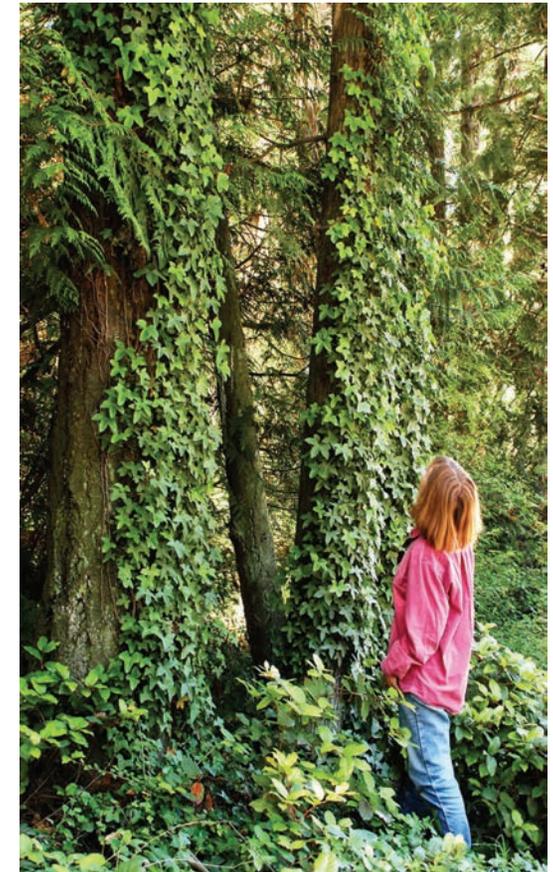
Thanks to the No Ivy League; The Nature Conservancy (Jonathan Soll), and Dr. Eugene Kozloff

English Ivy

(*Hedera helix* var.)

Class C noxious weed

(Selected for control in San Juan County)



Credit: SJCNCWB

Why control English ivy?

Ivy chokes out surrounding plants, stresses supporting trees, accelerates wood rot, and its shallow roots destabilize banks. It has become one of the most prevalent and destructive weeds in Pacific Northwest urban and suburban forests

Before you begin:

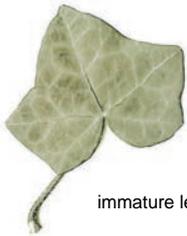
Create a plan for restoration before removing weeds or disturbing the soil. Determine if enough desirable vegetation is present to replace the ivy. If not, newly exposed soil can be planted with rapidly growing non-invasive plants.

Tools for ivy removal:

- Work gloves
- Protective clothing. Ivy sap is mildly toxic and may cause dermatitis.
- Loppers
- Pruning saw
- String trimmer
- Appropriate herbicide and equipment, if needed



mature leaf



immature leaf

Prioritize your control plan:

English ivy reproduces vegetatively and by seed, dispersed primarily by birds. Controlling ivy's proliferation by seed is the first priority. This can be done by clipping blossoms and removing vertical vines, since only mature, and, typically, climbing ivy produces fruit. At the minimum, clipping seeds heads or string-trimming at least once a year to keep ivy in the juvenile stage will limit its spread. The chosen approach for removing ivy from the ground will depend on the density of the ivy and on the amount of surrounding native or ornamental vegetation.

Ivy Removal

By law, herbicides must be used in strict accordance with label instructions.

Research on effective and safe herbicide use is on-going and often contradictory. For more recent information contact the San Juan County Noxious Weed Control Program.

From trees:

Mechanical: Use either loppers or a pruning saw to cut through the vines at both shoulder and ankle height, depending on the vine's diameter, be careful to minimize damage to the bark. Strip all cut vines away from the tree using a prying tool if needed. Leave the ivy above the shoulder cut to wither and pull the ivy below the lower cutting at least 6 feet away from the base of the tree.

Chemical: triclopyr (e.g. Cut Stump and Vine Killer™ or 25% glyphosate (e.g.Roundup™), may be painted on the cut stubs, optimally within 30 seconds of cutting. Be careful to only let the herbicides contact the target plant.

On the ground:

Mechanical: Begin by removing isolated plants, working toward the denser infestations. When pulling ivy from the ground it is essential to lift out as many root fragments as possible, limiting regrowth. Uprooting is more effective when the ground is moist. In drier seasons, wetting the soil first is recommended. Using shears, cut lines through the mat to make an outline of a box (say 4' wide by 10' long), then do the "log roll" by rolling up the mat, using a mattock or other digging tools to pry loose any remaining roots.

Rolling up the pulled vine will make it easier to tell what has been pulled. Clean an area of ivy thoroughly before moving on to a new area.

Mulching: Ivy can be smothered by covering it with a tarp or with 8 or more inches of mulch. To protect trees and woody shrubs, keep the mulch at least 3 inches away from their base. If pulling or mulching are not practical, periodically mow it with a string-trimmer.

Targeted grazing: Goats and sheep will help control ivy.

Chemical: Use a string trimmer to reduce the amount of foliage, decreasing the volume of herbicide needed and increasing its effectiveness. Immediately after cutting, spot-spray, paint, or use a wick applicator to apply triclopyr (e.g. Blackberry & Brush Killer™), or glyphosate (e.g. Roundup™) to the remaining foliage and stems. Be careful to only contact the target species. Mixing the herbicides with surfactants is recommended to increase penetration. A study by The Nature Conservancy suggests that herbicide use on ivy is more effective and is less damaging to native plants when applied on dry sunny days in December and January and when the temperature is above 55 degrees. Results of winter herbicide treatment may not be evident for up to five months. Ivy can also be wicked or sprayed in late spring after new leaves have developed but before they thicken and acquire waxy coats. Be sure to follow label instructions.

Use a combination of mechanical and chemical methods to increase the success of noxious weed control.

What to do with the remains:

Exposing the stems and rootlets to air for a week should dry out the ivy enough to keep it from re-rooting. The dried ivy remains will eventually break down to about 1/5 of the original size. Covering the pile with a tarp will speed decomposition.

Site restoration:

After a section of ivy has been removed, replant with native or non-invasive ornamental species. The site should be monitored at least yearly and any recurring ivy removed.

Alternatives to English ivy:

Natives such as: Oregon grape, salal, sword fern, western bleeding heart, inside-out flower, false lily of the valley, twinflower, western trumpet honeysuckle, kinnikinnick, evergreen yellow violet, and coastal strawberry. For non-invasive ornamentals consult WSU Master Gardeners (378-4414), or your local nursery.