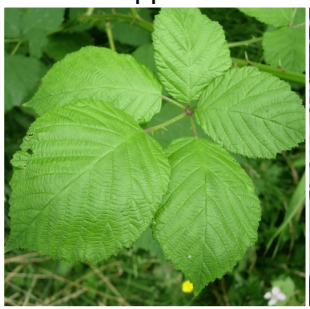
About Himalayan and Evergreen Blackberries

Both have tall upright canes that arc with age, reaching several yards in length, and armed with numerous heavy, recurved prickles. The biennial canes grow from a perennial, underground, burl-like root crown. First-year canes bear leaves but not flowers. Second-year canes bear numerous white to pinkish flowers and edible fruit, then die at the end of the season. Blackberries reproduce by seed, suckers, and by rooting when the stem tips contact soil. The seeds, dispersed by birds, remain viable for several years.

The two are easily distinguished by the difference in shape and color of foliage. The ovate, finely-toothed Himalayan blackberry leaves are green above and paler grayish-green below. Evergreen blackberry leaves are deeply incised, jagged-toothed and green on both upper and lower leaf surfaces.



Himalayan Blackberry

Evergreen Blackberry

Why control Himalayan and Evergreen Blackberries?

These non-native shrubs pose threats to our oak savannahs, rocky balds and open meadows by overtaking and replacing native shrubs, forbs and grasses. A single fast-growing Himalayan blackberry shrub will first appear as an individual cane, then as clusters of canes, gradually increasing in size to form an impenetrable thicket.

Before you begin:

Create a plan for restoration before removing weeds or disturbing the soil. Exposed soil can be sown with native or non-invasive perennial grasses to promote competition.

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 Program 2020

P.O. Box 1634
or
62 Henry Road, #26
Eastsound, WA 98245
(360) 376-3499

jasono@sanjuanco.com

shawnb@sanjuanco.com

https://extension.wsu.edu/sanjuan/noxious/

Special thanks to The Nature Conservancy and University of California, Davis.

Himalayan and Evergreen Blackberry

(***Rubus armeniacus and Rubus laciniatus***)

Class C Noxious Weed

(Control encouraged, but not required by law)

Photo credit: WA NWCB

Blackberry Control

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.

Timing

Blackberry removal is best done from late June through September when most of the plant's energy is devoted to flowering and fruiting. Avoid mowing when fruit is ripe.

Tools for Blackberry Removal

- Heavy leather gloves and protective clothing
- Brush cutter, loppers, claw mattock, backhoe
- Appropriate herbicide and equipment, if needed.

Remove the above-ground biomass first, thus making the shrubs easier to dig out and reducing the amount of herbicide, if applied.

Manual & Mechanical Control

Pulling: Uproot 1st year and shade-suppressed weaker plants when the soil is moist and loose. Firmly grab the stem near its base (or use a weed wrench) to extract the crowns.

Hand digging: Use a claw mattock to loosen the dirt around the plant's roots before pulling them out. Extracting the roots from deep, loamy, sandy or damp soil is easier, and less damaging to the surrounding area, than is trying to remove them from rocky or dry soil.

Backhoe: Dig out the root crowns and major roots using a backhoe with mechanical thumb or claw.

Cutting: Use a mower, brushcutter, machete, or loppers to repeatedly cut the above-ground vegetation. Although effective in reducing plant biomass, this method requires years of treatment unless augmented with an herbicide. As with other perennial invasive plants, if only a single yearly cutting is made, the best time to do so is when the plant is in bud or flower stage, but before it produces seed.

Cultural Control

Sheet Mulching: Bare-ground areas may be sheet mulched to prevent blackberry establishment.

Burning: Fire will not eliminate blackberry, but controlled burning can be useful for eliminating dead canes and reducing biomass.

Biological Controls

Targeted Grazing: Goats can reduce and control invasive blackberries. Sheep also browse blackberries, but less effectively.

Chemical Control

Always follow label instructions to find the correct herbicide concentration and timing for your site and the method you plan to use.

Timing: Systemic herbicide application is most effective when the soil is moist and in early spring, when carbohydrates move from crown to buds, or in the fall when movement is from leaves to the crown. Avoid using herbicides when soil is dry and/or when plants are stressed. Adding a dye marker can help reduce the amount of herbicide used.

Cut Stump Treatment: In late spring or early fall, apply triclopyr and/or glyphosate directly to the cambial area around the edges of freshly cut stumps. Applications should be made within 10 minutes of cutting to ensure effectiveness.

Spot Spray: Cut the plant in mid-summer and then allow it to resprout to about 18 inches. In late September through early November, apply triclopyr and/or glyphosate to the fully leafed new growth. Spot spraying is less effective when plants are drought stressed or have not fully leafed out.

Basal/Stem Sprays: In fall, apply high label rates of an oil-based triclopyr (BEE) to the basal portion of selected stems. An additional surfactant may be necessary for the active ingredient to penetrate the canes and enter the vascular system.

Follow-up

Monitor and eradicate new populations while keeping any established populations from spreading into non-infested or recently controlled areas.

Cultural: Sheet mulching will help suppress germination following removal. Repeated torching can deplete the energy of small plants and re-sprouting stumps.

***Biocontrol*:** Graze goats or sheep on regrowth in areas where the mature plants have been removed.

Chemical: Spot spray regrowth following cutting or burning.

Debris Removal: The canes can be brush-mown, chipped, or burned (if permissible). May be left in place, although live cuttings must be prevented from sprouting. Mowing and chipping material bearing ripe fruit may further spread the infestation.

Site Restoration: Immediately re-seed bare areas with native or non-invasive perennial grasses, particularly after removing dense blackberry stands, to reduce erosion and subsequent weed invasions.

Native Trailing Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*) & Blackcap Raspberry *(Rubus leucodermis)*

Trailing blackberry is a prostrate, evergreen perennial vine that grows in a variety of habitats and may be dense or sprawling dependent on sunlight. Blackcap raspberry has a growth habit somewhat similar to exotic *Rubus* species, but with milky-white canes. Both provide delicious small-sized fruit and habitat for native wildlife and pollinators.

Trailing Blackberry
© WSU Ext.

Blackcap Raspberry
© Zoya Akulova