

Mason County Noxious Weed Alert

Ginseng Family

English Ivy

Hedera helix

Identification Tips

- Woody evergreen vine.
- Leaves are alternate on stem; green and leathery.
- Distinct juvenile and adult leaves.
- Juvenile leaves are 1.5 to 4 inches, hairy, and have 3 to 5 lobes.
- Mature leaves are egg to diamond shaped, lack hairs and occur on flowering stem.
- Roots grow from leaf nodes, and are used to attach to and climb up neighboring plants.
- Fruits are dark blue to black, with 4 to 5 seeds.
- With support, can grow up to 99 feet tall.



Biology

- Evergreen perennial.
- Plants may take up to 10 years to mature and flower.
- Flowers are umbrella shaped and greenish-white in color, flowering in the fall.
- Fruits mature in spring.
- Plant can spread vegetatively during juvenile stage.
- Has a long growing season (9 to 10 months).



English ivy growing on overstory trees is a common sight in Mason County.

Non-Regulated Class C Noxious Weed: Control Recommended

Impacts

- **Leaves and fruits are toxic to humans and cattle.**
- **Sap may be a skin irritant.**
- Will climb up understory and overstory plants, eventually shading out and killing them.
- Increases fall hazard of trees.
- Outcompetes native shrubs and groundcover.
- Increases erosion potential.
- Grows over man-made structures, accelerating degradation and rot.

Distribution

- English ivy was popular for landscaping and gardens, and can now be found invading much of western Washington.
- Will escape cultivation, invading forest edges, woodlands, disturbed sites, riparian and coastal sites.
- Can grow in a variety of soil types, light conditions and elevations.

QUESTIONS? Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control at:

(360) 427-9670 ext. 592 or weeds@masoncountywa.gov

<https://extension.wsu.edu/mason/natural-resources/noxious-weed-program/>

What You Can Do

While there is no legal requirement for controlling English ivy in Mason County, the Board recognizes this plant as invasive and is collecting information and providing education on control. The Board encourages and recommends control of existing populations especially in natural lands and forests.

Control Methods

English ivy is difficult to control once it's established at a site. A combination of control methods is required to eradicate English ivy. **Contact Mason County Noxious Weed Control for more information.**

Prevention

Do not purchase or plant English ivy. Consider planting less invasive groundcovers. **If you already have English ivy in your yard take steps to remove plants.** Do not dump yardwaste with English ivy in your yard or other natural areas, as plants can easily reroot. Examine new soil and gravel for English ivy.

Manual Control

Manual control, while labor intensive, is one of the most effective control methods. **Wear gloves and protective clothing to avoid contact with sap.**

Remove as many flowers and seedheads as possible, place in a sealed bag, and dispose of in the trash. Large plants growing up trees can be cut at the base, and where possible, removed from the tree. Dig out or handpull all accessible plants on the ground. Small amounts of leaves and cuttings can be placed in yard waste container or bagged. Large quantities can be left to dry on site. Keep pile off the ground such as on a tarp, or turn regularly to avoid rerooting.



A responsible property owner took charge of this English ivy infestation. These trees are now free!

Try these non-invasive alternatives in your garden!



orange honeysuckle
Lonicera ciliosa



crinkle leaf creeper
Rubus calycinoides



kinnikinnik
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi



false lily of the Valley
Maianthemum dilatatum

These plants will add similar characteristics to your garden without taking over!

Mechanical Control

Repeated mowing can work as a control method. You must remove all clippings to prevent resprouting. Mulching works to control English ivy. It can be applied over live or recently cut plants. Mulch layer must be at least 8 inches thick. Mulching an area after it has been manually cleared will prevent reinfestation.

Chemical

Choose a formulation that is appropriate for your site. Follow the label exactly as written and use only at rate prescribed. Do not apply herbicide over or near water bodies.

A systemic herbicide containing triclopyr or glyphosate can be used to treat English ivy. Selective herbicides, such as triclopyr, will not impact grasses. The best time to treat English ivy is late summer to early fall, when temperature is > 55° F. The waxy leaves can prevent product absorption, decrease efficacy of treatment, and increase off-target damage. Improve results by using a surfactant in your mix. Do not cut English ivy for at least 2 weeks after herbicide application. For plants growing up trees, the cut stem method (applying herbicide to freshly cut stem) is suggested. The most effective control strategy will integrate multiple control methods.

Contact the Mason County Noxious Weed Control Board with questions about herbicide application.

