

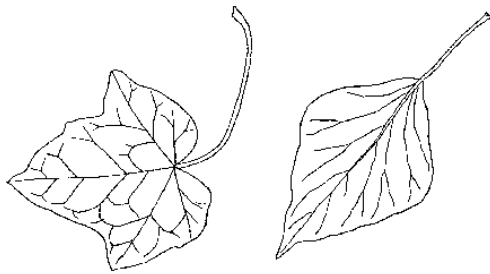


## FACT SHEET

### English Ivy (*Hedera helix*)

**English ivy** is a woody, evergreen perennial that grows as a vine (climbing or creeping) or as a shrub.

- English ivy can photosynthesize year-round and can grow for 9 to 10 months of the year.
- Vines can grow over 90 feet long.
- Older vines can be tree-like and as much as 5 inches thick.
- Adventitious roots are formed at the leaf nodes of immature plants and they help ivy climb by adhering or anchoring to surfaces – they do not penetrate the surface.
- Four cultivars of English Ivy are considered to be invasive and are on the [Washington State Noxious Weed List](#): *Hedera helix* 'Baltica', *Hedera helix* 'Pittsburgh', *Hedera helix* 'Star' and *Hedera hibernica* 'Hibernica'.
- There are two distinct forms and growth stages of English ivy: the juvenile and mature form.



#### Juvenile

3 to 5 lobes

Stems produce roots

#### Mature

Unlobed, or slightly lobed

Produces flowers and berries when it begins to grow vertically

#### WHY BE CONCERNED?

- English ivy grows into the tree canopy and shades out deciduous foliage, suppressing the host tree
- English ivy adds substantial weight to a tree, making it more likely to be blown down
- Thick English ivy mats can accelerate rot and deteriorate structures
- Fast-growing ivy competes with other plants for water and nutrients
- English ivy limits understory regeneration by blocking sunlight and shading out plants
- English ivy can provide habitat for rats and other vermin

**DISTRIBUTION:** English ivy is widespread in Jefferson County—in parks, on roadsides and even in ornamental plantings, although this use is widely discouraged.

**ECOLOGY:** English ivy spreads vegetatively through its long vines that root at the nodes and climb over any obstacle. It can take years to mature and form berries. The seeds in the berries are distributed mostly by birds, although they have reported as being toxic to some birds. Ivy is shade-tolerant and adapted to a wide range of soils. Therefore it sprouts easily almost anywhere seeds are dropped.

## CONTROL

### Prevention and early detection are the best means of control!

- Do not buy or plant English ivy
- Consider planting alternative groundcovers such as salal, Oregon grape, kinnikinnick, foamflower or wild-ginger
- Do not allow existing English ivy plantings to escape into the woods or begin to climb trees

**MANUAL CONTROL**, even though it is labor intensive, is the most effective for English ivy. Wear protective clothing. The sap can cause a reaction in some people.

- Remove flowers or seed heads you can reach.
- Cut the vines or pry them off of trees with the aid of a tool at a comfortable height. This will kill the upper vines – you can leave them on the tree to die.
- Hand pull or dig out accessible plants. The roots are not usually deep and can be pulled fairly easily—more easily when soil is moist.
- Dispose of properly: do not compost unless the ivy is dead. Pile the pulled ivy on a tarp to dry out and die. Once dry, you can compost it.
- Monitor the site for several years; promptly remove new seedlings.
- Heavy mulch will help prevent re-infestation

**HERBICIDES** are not usually effective on English ivy because they run off the waxy leaves. However, some sites may be too large to control manually in which case herbicides may be the best option. For perennial weeds, long term control requires stopping seed production **and** attacking the weed's root system. Translocated herbicides, (ones that move throughout a plant's system) are recommended. Leaves are most susceptible to herbicide treatment when they first appear, so early spring treatment or cutting first and treating fresh re-growth will increase effectiveness.

- **Cut-stump treatment** (cutting the plant down to a few inches above ground and immediately painting the cut stump surface with undiluted herbicide) can also be used if the stem is large enough. Check the label first—make sure that this method is listed.

**Call the Weed Board for specific herbicide advice.**



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