

English Ivy

Environmental Weed
Fact Sheet

No. 3



Botanical Name:

Hedera helix

Common Name:

English Ivy

Native to Europe



What it does

English Ivy is a climbing or creeping plant that will endure hard conditions such as dense shade and can become very invasive. Ivy eventually kills its support plant (mainly trees) by smothering, preventing bark shedding or excluding light and photosynthesis. The weight of the ivy may cause the support plant to collapse.

How it spreads

Flowering and seeding occurs in autumn after the plant has grown vertically and has access to more light. The berries are eaten by birds and the seeds are dropped into gardens and bushland. The plant also reproduces vegetatively, with stems taking root and spreading from each node. Ivy spread is also caused by dumping of garden cuttings in bushland and on roadsides. Once established, growth is rapid. Ivy prefers cooler shaded positions but can survive in extreme conditions.

What it looks like

The young plant has leaves with three to four pointed lobes with dark green above and a paler underside. The leaves of a flowering shoot have a less pointed or lobed appearance. Ivy grows with continuous, long-running, woody stems. Rootlets which are produced along the runners help the plant to self layer and to cling to vertical surfaces. The plant forms a thick blanket of foliage and eventually destroys any vegetation it covers.

How to remove it

Hand removal

Hand pull horizontal and vertical woody stems, and new and emerging seedlings.

Spray

Spraying is best done in spring or summer when there is new growth. Brushcutting plants can be done to stimulate the new growth before spraying. Spray ground level sections with a registered herbicide.

Cut and paint

Cut a section of vertical woody stems from ground level to 1m high and paint both ends immediately with a registered herbicide such as a glyphosate based product. Loosen stems from tree if possible.

Weeds should be disposed of at Recovery and Waste Transfer Centres or in the Hard Waste Collection Service that is provided to residents twice a year (please bag or box the weeds to reduce spread).

Alternatives to plant

Some suggestions are *Hardenbergia violacea* (Purple Coral Pea) and *Clematis aristata* (Austral Clematis) or any ground cover indigenous plant would be suitable. For a list of species specific to your property, please contact the Shire.

Produced by the Shire of Yarra Ranges in the interests of a healthier environment



English Ivy Control Program

Yarra Ranges Council has committed \$30,000 in funding to a community-based environmental program which aims to control English Ivy on both roadside reserves and private property.

Ivy is prolific throughout the ranges and was popular in the early days, creating a green impression reminiscent of European landscapes, however it has been devastating to the indigenous species in the area. The spread of ivy through the ranges has smothered native plants and destroyed habitat for local fauna.

Parts of the Dandenong Ranges generate the biggest ivy problem, particularly in the Sassafras, Olinda and Monbulk areas. English Ivy thrives in the cooler shady environment of the Dandenongs and is flourishing in these areas.

Like many plants classified as environmental weeds, ivy 'escapes' from private property and spreads through roadside reserves and parkland.

Council's control program aims to reduce ivy on both private and public land and to control its spread onto public land.

Shire officers will work with local property owners who wish to participate in the control program. Residents are encouraged to form local groups to work together with the Shire in target areas.

The best time for treating ivy is when growth is most vigorous, usually in spring and early summer. Control measures include hand pulling, cutting through stems and treating with a registered herbicide and in some cases, spraying at ground level.

Further information on the control program is available from the Shire's Roadside Management Officer, Sophie Akers on 9294 6148