English Ivy *Hedera helix*

Environmental Weed Factsheet

Origin: Europe

Size: Climber to 30m

Best removal time: Before seeds form

Flowers: February - May

What it does…

English Ivy is an aggressive, highly invasive weed in many parts of the world. It has no natural predator or control and can transform large areas of diverse plants solely to ivy. This deprives habitat and food sources for indigenous wildlife, discouraging native birds, butterflies and insects. Ivy forms mats which suppress all ground level plants, preventing natural regeneration. Food and shelter for local wildlife is lost.

All parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested, and the sap is an irritant on contact. The plant is covered in minute hairs which may cause sneezing and eye irritation.

What it looks like…

Ivy needs to climb up from the ground to flower and produces seed from black, berry-like fruit. It eventually kills its support plant, mainly trees by smothering, preventing natural bark shed, excluding light and photosynthesis. Its sheer weight can cause the tree to collapse. Thick mats of ivy against wood or brick structures can cause structural damage. The vines penetrate into the wood frame or brickwork causing accelerated rot and nest sites for vermin.

How it spreads…

- birds.
- illegal dumping of garden cuttings in bushlands, roadsides and waterways.

How to remove it…

Remove by Hand: Small plants can easily be hand pulled when the soil is soft. It is best to try and remove the young plants before they begin to flower.

Spray with herbicide: Where there is a large infestation contact an appropriately licensed and trained weed control contractor for assistance.

Cut & Paint: This method may be more practical for larger plants. Cut close to the ground. Be sure to paint the cut as quickly as possible to ensure the plant absorbs the poison.

Please contact the Yarra Ranges Council's Environment Department on 1300 368 333 for more information on weed removal techniques, support and training available and details of active community groups in your area.

Indigenous alternatives to plant…

Many creeper alternatives exist that are indigenous to the Yarra Ranges region and would make great substitutes for English Ivy. Some alternatives include:

Purple Coral Pea,
Hardenbergia violacea

Austral Clematis,
Clematis aristata

How to dispose of weeds:

By disposing of environmental weeds correctly you can prevent re-infestation on your property and elsewhere.

- Landfill (Weed Wipeout Tip vouchers available for some species).
- Green waste bin ensures that weeds are not able to spread.
- Woody weed stems can be bundled for green collection twice per annum.
- Composting (excluding seed heads or species with vegetative reproduction, e.g. Wandering Trad).
- Burning in accordance with Council and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) prescribed burning periods and regulations.
- Recovery and transfer stations available for weed tipping are Healesville, Wesburn, Coldstream, Lysterfield and Montrose.

Bare ground attracts WEEDS!!!

For effective long term weed control we recommend:

- Habitat Restoration
    - Encourages indigenous and native plant to regenerate
    - Revegetation - replanting indigenous vegetation
- Productive land use.
- Replace with non invasive garden species.

Using Chemicals:

Non chemical treatments is often the most effective and safe option especially on smaller scale infestations.

Where chemical use is undertaken:

- Always follow the manufacture's guidelines when using chemicals.
- Wear protective clothing and eyewear
- On purchasing your herbicide, always ask for a Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) or refer to the manufacturer's website for specific safety guidelines and information.
- Some herbicides will kill other plants and not just the target species.
- Near waterways herbicides can be very poisonous to aquatic life.
- Use chemicals sparingly and be sure that you are using the right chemical and application technique.
- Ensure the weather conditions are suitable (e.g. minimal wind and no rain expected)
- Apply herbicides at the correct time during the plant's growth cycle so you get the best results..

Yarra Ranges Council