

ENGLISH IVY MANAGEMENT

PLANT PROFILE

English Ivy is a woody perennial vine that tolerates a wide range of conditions including shade and full sun. It was introduced as an ornamental vine and has since spread into natural areas through vegetative growth and seed dispersal. The vine is a favored ornamental because of its dark evergreen foliage, hardy growth habit, and propensity for climbing structures. These same attributes also make it extremely challenging to control and eradicate.



PHOTOS BY
LEVI MORRIS

ID CHARACTERISTICS

Juvenile leaves are bright green and lobed with lighter green patterns following the venation of the leaves. As the leaves mature, they turn dark green with pale cream-colored patterns following the venation of the leaves. English ivy produces small greenish flowers in dense umbels which will eventually produce a small berry like fruit. The fruit is green and ripens to a dark purple. Leaves are 1-4 inches in length with 3-5 lobes. Infestations of English ivy usually start as a dense ground cover 4-8 inches in height, the vines will expand until they encounter tree, shrubs, etc. and begin growing up the structure.

MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

This is a challenging non-native invasive species to control. Over time this perennial invader forms a dense matted ground cover that chokes out competitors. English ivy will also twine up shrubs, trees, and structures. English ivy can damage the trunks of small trees by constricting the trunk, overtaking the crown, and shading them out. Heavy infestations of English ivy can cause serious damage to mature trees and should be removed from any desirable specimens. Portions of the plant that remain in the shaded understory typically will not flower and fruit. Vines atop structures and reaching into the canopy of trees will produce a prolific number of flowers and fruits. The thick waxy cuticle on the mature leaves makes it resistant to poorly timed herbicide treatments.

WETLAND HERBICIDE RESTRICTIONS

When treating invasives within a wetland it is best to work with a certified commercial applicator. Herbicides commonly available through retailers are not wetland approved. Wetland approved herbicides can only be sold to properly licensed applicators. Products such as Round Up have surfactants that can be damaging to aquatic species.



NEW JERSEY
AUDUBON

CONTROL & ERADICATION OF ENGLISH IVY

Protecting Trees and Structures: Our recommendation is to identify any desirable trees or structures near or in the infested area and begin removing the ivy. Using loppers, hand saws, or shears, cut the ivy at the base of the tree and leave a large gap (3ft) between the base of the tree and the cut stems trailing up the tree. This will kill the portions ascending the tree and prevent them from healing. It can take up to three months for the ivy to die back after being cut, but it will die once separated from the rooted stems.

Mowing: Regular use of a mower or string trimmer is an effective method for suppressing the spread of English ivy. Once the vertical growth has been controlled mowing at the edges of the population and around the bases of trees is an effective way to prevent the ivy spreading. Regular mowing throughout the growing season (once a week April – September) can be effective in eradicating the population. When using this method, it is important to mow the entirety of the population to deplete the energy reserves of the root system.

Dragging/Hand Pulling: Uprooting the plants can also be an effective control measure but is also the most labor intensive. Dragging can be completed with a rake like attachment for a vehicle or heavy equipment. This is not necessary for smaller populations that can be pulled by hand.

Chemical Control: *When using herbicide always read and follow the label of the product, the label is the law!* Timing is of critical importance when treating English ivy. It is best to treat English ivy in the early spring when an abundance of juvenile leaves are available. These leaves are the most susceptible to the herbicide and are more likely to carry it to throughout the plant. The thick waxy cuticle of mature leaves provides a barrier to herbicide uptake. After the initial treatment wait for 6 weeks before reapplying herbicide (if necessary). English ivy will be more resistant to herbicide treatment as the season progresses, utilize mowing to produce a flush of fresh growth that is susceptible to herbicide treatment. Several sources have reported glyphosate as the most effective herbicide for control of English ivy, but mixtures of triclopyr and glyphosate have also been successful. A 4% mix of glyphosate applied to new growth in the early spring is an extremely effective control measure (Neal, 2019).

MANAGEMENT METHODS

Treatment	Treatment Type	Timing	Comments
Mowing	Mechanical	Once a week throughout the growing season (April – September) can be mowed in early spring (March) to prepare for herbicide treatment.	May take up to three years to completely deplete the roots system
Dragging/Hand Pulling	Mechanical	Anytime the plant is visible	A single dragging/pulling will not remove the entire root mass. Keep an eye out for resprouting and follow up with hand pulling, herbicide, or repeated mowing
Post Emergent Herbicide	Chemical	Treatment will be most effective in early spring (April) when new growth and leaves are on the plant.	Mowing the ivy a few weeks before herbicide application can also trigger a surge of fresh growth throughout the growing season

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