

English Ivy, a Growing Problem

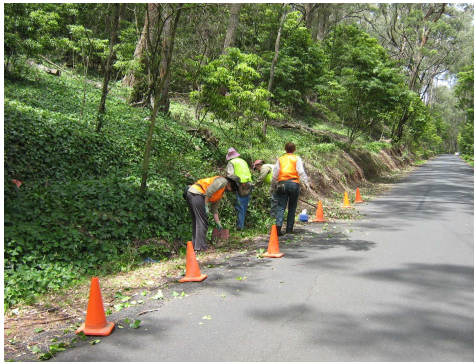
"It will completely smother everything beneath it and can even force trees to collapse under its weight."

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) is one of the more invasive weeds in the Shire and like a large proportion of the Shire's weeds, was introduced from Europe by the early settlers.

English Ivy is classed as an environmental weed in Wingecarribee Shire and thrives in our ideal growing conditions. It is both a vigorous climber and also creates a dense groundcover, which if left unchecked can become dominant. With its vigorous growth, English Ivy competes with the native plants and can have a devastating impact upon the habitat of native fauna, as it reduces the variety of food sources that are available. Trees have collapsed under the weight of English Ivy.



English Ivy is a tenacious climber often seen covering trees, which enables better distribution of its seeds which are contained in purple berries. It will occasionally produce berries, when it is a groundcover, but it will predominately produce fruit as a climber as there is greater access to sunlight. These berries are an attractive food source for birds, foxes and other animals, and through their normal activities encourage further seed distribution. Consequently this plant has become a major problem as it invades forests, river side habitats and roadside vegetation throughout eastern NSW and other states.



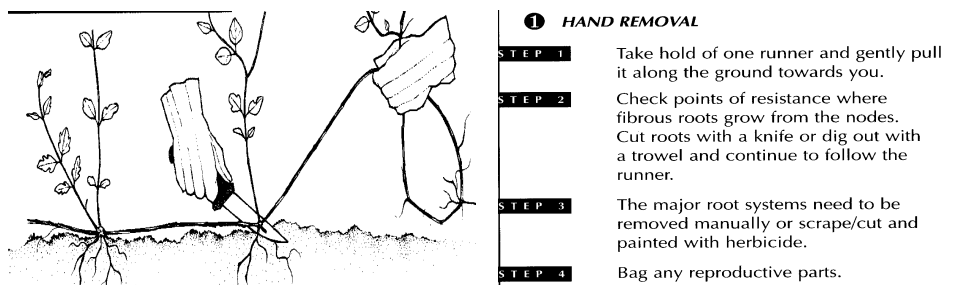
You Can Help!

Residents are strongly encouraged to prevent the spread of English Ivy on their properties, particularly if their property is located near bushland or sensitive locations near water courses. Council can provide advice and information sheets on the most practical methods to remove English Ivy. When removing garden waste, dispose of it legally. Consider composting it in the backyard or taking the material to an approved waste facility such as Council's RRC. It

is illegal to dump garden waste, and it also enables weeds to spread, creating further problems.

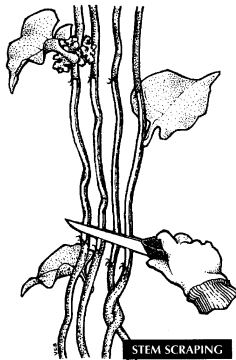
Removal Methods

If Ivy occurs in small patches it can be simply removed by hand by pulling out along the rooting nodes back to the main stem where it can be cut off with secateurs and painted with herbicide.



(Diagram and notes courtesy of National Trust, NSW NPWS, AABR)

Stems may also be treated using the scrape and paint method which involves using a knife to scrape the stems and then paint with herbicide such as one containing Glyphosate as the active ingredient (your local nursery will be able to help with herbicide selection).



② STEM SCRAPING

STEP 1

With a knife, scrape 15 to 30 cm of the stem to reach the layer below the bark/outer layer.

STEP 2

Immediately apply herbicide along the length of the scrape.

(Diagram and notes courtesy of National Trust, NSW NPWS, AABR)



Once Ivy has engulfed trees and shrubs the control process involves cutting the Ivy off at the base and then again at about 50cm above ground level and painting the cut stems with herbicide containing Glyphosate. The top portion should be left to die and will eventually fall off over time. Do not pull off trees, as serious damage to the bark may result.

If the infestation is extensive, concentrate on controlling the climbing stems before the ones covering the ground as these aerial stems are the ones that produce the berries and seeds.

Aesthetic Issues

Some residents have pointed out that vine covered timber fences are part of the aesthetic appeal of the highlands, and particularly places like Old Bowral. With care and forethought it is possible to preserve these historic fence lines and replace the Ivy with other vines that aren't invasive weeds.

English Ivy Alternatives

For residents who like the look of English Ivy, there are some native alternatives to replace this invasive weed. These include:

- Old Man's Beard (*Clematis aristata*)- vigorous climber with showy white flowers
- Twining Purple Pea / False Sarsparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) – moderately vigorous vine with showy purple flowers
- Wombat Berry (*Eustrephus latifolius*) – Twining vine with orange fleshy berries
- Native Violet (*Viola hederacea*) – hardy and lush evergreen groundcover with white and blue violet flowers
- Guinea Flower (*Hibbertia pedunculata*) – profuse bright yellow flowers on dense groundcover of dark green foliage
- Creeping Booblialla (*Myoporum parvifolium*) – hardy dense groundcover with white or pink flowers

Website links

<http://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Sheets/vines/V%20English%20ivy.htm>