

Ivy

Hedera helix

Family

Araliaceae (ivy)

Also known as

English ivy, many cultivars with different leaf shape and colouring

Where is it originally from?

Europe, North Africa, Tropical and Subtropical Asia

What does it look like?

Perennial climber with woody stout stems that become erect at flowering, attaching to whatever is supporting it with aerial rootlets. Hairless dark green or variegated ivory-white leaves (3-15 cm long) are arranged alternately on stems, and are variably shaped (usually shallowly lobed). Tiny, insignificant yellowish-green flowers (Mar-May) are sometimes followed by purple to black berries (5-8 mm diameter) containing seeds with low viability.

Are there any similar species?

Senecio mikanioides and *Senecio angulatus*, and *Hedera canariensis* are similar.

Why is it weedy?

Clings to and climbs almost any surface, can grow over forest floor, sub-canopy and canopy to great heights, forming dense, long-lived masses at a moderate to fast growth rate and completely smothering tree trunks and branches. Tolerates cold, damp, wind, salt, differing soil types, shade, damage, and drought.

How does it spread?

Birds readily spread seed when it is produced, but most spread is through pieces dumped with greenwaste. Gardens, roadsides, vacant land, and cemeteries are all sources of spread.

What damage does it do?

Smothers and kills all plants from ground level to canopy, destroys vulnerable epiphyte niches, and prevents the establishment of native plant seedlings. The weight of an infestation can bring down branches or whole trees. Invasion into established forest is slow but relentless through the ground or canopy.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Open lowland and montane forest and forest margins, rocky land, fernland, coastline, cliffs, shrublands, and tussockland.

What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Stump swab (all year round): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g /L). Best for aerial vines. Use a paint brush to liberally cover the cut surfaces within 15 minutes of cutting and all stem bases where exposed.
2. Spray (summer): glyphosate (10ml/L) or metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L (knapsack) or 40g/100L (spraygun)) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (60ml/10L). Add penetrant to all mixes. Do not use for ivy growing against trees.

What can I do to stop it coming back?

Stumps resprout and cut stems root at nodes. Many plants do not produce viable (or any) seed, but once established, ivy is hard to kill and dispose of. In damp areas growth on trees can survive for long periods after stump cut. However in most cases the vine dies, although slowly. For aerial growth on trees in wet areas, remove large stems gradually after cutting stump to minimise shock to host trees. In all other cases, leave stems to die on the tree. Always dry and burn or deep bury all cut stems or take them to a refuse transfer station.



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