

Ivy (English ivy)

Hedera helix



Identification

- A robust climber with woody stems
- Can attach to trees and supporting structures using aerial rootlets
- Leaves are green or variegated and are up to 7 cm in diameter
- The lobed juvenile leaves are most commonly seen, adult leaves are less lobed
- Small flowers in autumn are followed by berries that turn black



Fruiting ivy with adult leaves Photo: C. Howell (DOC)



Ivy growing up the side of a house Photo: R. McCaw (ECAN)

Where is it found?

Ivy is found in a wide range of places as it can tolerate extreme conditions.

Why is it a problem?

Ivy quickly spreads along the ground and up structures and trees. It usually forms a heavy mass, smothering vegetation and damaging structures and trees. Once established ivy can become very hard to remove. Cut stems and broken or discarded fragments quickly resprout, making effective control difficult.

Similar species

German ivy has thin leaves and Cape ivy has thick fleshy leaves. German ivy can climb to 3 m, Cape ivy to 10 m and ivy can climb to a height of 30 m.

Control

Hand control by cutting will need regular follow up to be effective. Applying a herbicide to the cut stem can help but follow up is still needed. Spraying ivy is not always effective and can result in damage to desirable plants. Make sure any cut ivy is removed and disposed of safely. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Ivy with typical juvenile leaves. Photo: C. Howell (DOC)