

IVY SPECIES

English ivy (*Hedera helix*)

Algerian ivy (*Hedera canariensis*)

Ginseng Family (Araliaceae—some botanists now consider members of this family to be properly classed within the family Apiaceae.)

DESCRIPTION

Both English and Algerian ivy are woody ever-green vines commonly found in moist, shady woodland areas.

Ivy grows as a vine and groundcover for up to 10 years before flowering. English ivy leaves are alternate, dark green, and leathery. They usually have 3–5 lobes, white veins, and aerial rootlets that secrete a sticky substance, enabling ivy to climb up tree trunks.

Older plants capable of flowering can turn increasingly shrubby, with leaves that are more oval and measure 2–4 inches long. Algerian ivy is distinguished from English ivy by its 3-lobed leaves, pink to reddish stems, and white flowers.

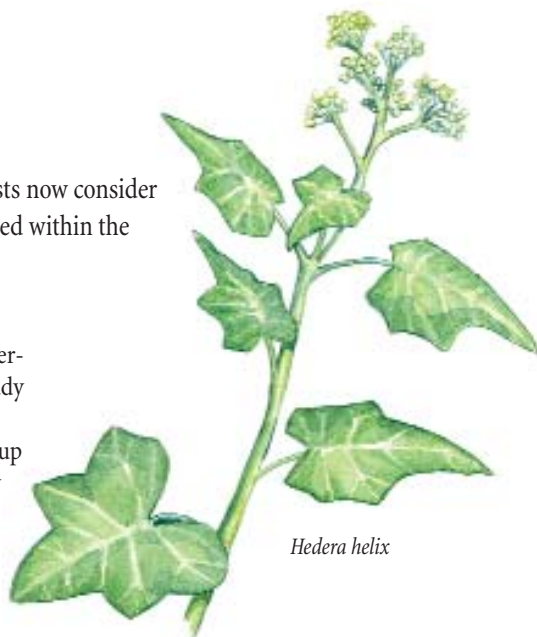
REPRODUCTION

In mature plants, terminal clusters of small, yellowish-green, and inconspicuous flowers appear in fall; blue-black berries appear the following spring.

English ivy spreads primarily by rhizomes, but it can also reproduce from seed. Seeds are disseminated by birds whose digestive tract scarifies the hard seed coat. Algerian ivy is a relatively new invader, so less is known about its reproduction. It is, however, reported to produce a large quantity of viable seed and to have a large root system.

IMPACT

Ivy vines form dense carpets of vegetation that can cover native vegetation as well as open soil. This dense groundcover can deprive native plants of light and nutrients and reduce germination of the native seedbank. Eventually even



Hedera helix

large trees can be killed by ivy climbing into their canopies. Algerian ivy is considered more invasive than English ivy because it is rapidly invading relatively undisturbed forest understories. The leaves and berries are toxic.

KEY FACTORS

- u Seed longevity not known, but reported to be quite viable.
- u Shallow root system, but resprouts from cut roots (typically more than a half-inch) left in contact with the soil.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Removing ivy can increase the potential for erosion on creek banks and slopes, so have an erosion control strategy in place prior to removal.

- u **Pull** vines climbing into trees and along the ground by hand or with rakes and McLeods. Ivy can sometimes be rolled up like a carpet and piled or hauled off-site.
- u **Cut** woody stems with pruners or loppers, and **dig** up the roots with a shovel to prevent resprouting.

- u **Cut and treat** vines that are well established or climbing into trees. Make two cuts to remove a 12- to 16-inch section of the vertical stem. The portion of the vine remaining in the tree, without access to the roots, will eventually die. To prevent resprouting from the lower portion remaining in the ground, the stump can be treated with herbicide (some land managers use a 50 percent solution of glyphosate) or cut out with a Pulaski or shovel.

DISPOSAL

Pulled ivy roots left in contact with soil may reroor. Piles may be left to decompose on a tarp on-site or hauled off-site and disposed of as green waste.

FOLLOW-UP

Check for resprouts or new seedlings 3–4 times a year. These are easy to remove by hand. If piles are in contact with soil, check for rerooting and regrowth.

INTERESTING FACTS

English ivy is native to Europe, was most likely introduced to the US as an ornamental in colonial times, and has been used to control soil erosion. Algerian ivy, as its name suggests, is native to northern Africa and southwest Europe. English ivy has been used since the time of the Ancient Greeks to treat a range of health complaints, including rheumatism, toothache, and even cellulite.

Notes