



English Ivy *Hedera helix* L.

Native Origin: Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa

Description: English ivy is an evergreen climbing vine in the ginseng family (Araliaceae) climbing to 90 feet by clinging aerial roots and trailing to form dense ground cover. Vines attach to the bark of trees, brickwork, and other surfaces by way of numerous, small root like structures, exuding glue like substance. 3-lobed heart-shaped leaves are dark green, waxy, somewhat leathery, and arranged alternately along the stem. Spring maturing black fruit with a fleshy outer covering encloses stone-like seeds.



Habitat: It thrives in open forests, forest edges, fields, hedgerows, coastal areas, salt marsh edges, and other upland areas, especially where some soil moisture is present. Shade tolerant but adapts to higher light levels with maturity. It avoids wet areas.

Distribution: This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in AZ, CA, DC, DE, GA, KY, LA, MD, NC, NJ, OR, PA, RI, SC, TN, VA, WA, WI, WV



Ecological Impacts: English ivy is an aggressive invader that threatens all vegetation levels of forested and open areas, growing along

the ground as well as into the forest canopy. Vines climbing up tree trunks spread out and surround branches and twigs, preventing most of the sunlight from reaching the leaves of the host tree. Loss of host tree vigor, evident within a few years, is followed by death a few years later.

Toxicity: Compounds in English ivy are somewhat toxic and include glycosides that cause vomiting, diarrhea, nervous conditions & dermatitis in sensitive individuals.



Control and Management: Do not plant English ivy.

- **Manual-** Pull up vines on the ground by hand then bag and dispose of plants; cut vines climbing on trees
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as triclopyr. Follow label and state requirements.

References: Miller, James H. Invasive Plants of Southern Forests- A Field Guide for Identification and Control, FS SRS-62. P. 36-37, <http://plants.usda.gov>, www.forestryimages.org, Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, NPS, P. 60-61, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/hehe1.htm