*Safe Yard Product Buying Guide*

# Pest Solution Fact Sheet

# Himalayan Blackberry

Himalayan Blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) is a fruiting vine which was introduced to the US in the 1800's and has become invasive, taking over pastures, fence lines, forest clearings and gardens. In its first year a new stem grows vigorously to its full length of 12-30 feet, trailing along the ground or forming stiff canes arching up to 12 feet high. It can root where the cane tips touch the ground. Flowers are not produced on first year shoots. In its second year, the stem does not grow longer, but produces several side shoots, which produce the flowers and berries.

The following methods and products can help control Himalayan blackberry without risking the health of your family, pets, or environment.

| Product/type | How to use |
|---|---|
| ***Mechanical*** | |
| **Cutting, Digging, and Pulling** | Fall and winter are the best times to cut, pull, and dig Himalayan blackberry. This timing minimizes harm to nesting birds and pollinators, and it is easier to dig when the soil is moist. It is also more comfortable to wear the protective clothing needed: long thorn-proof gloves, long sleeved shirt, pants and sturdy shoes or boots. Cut the canes with brush cutters, blade-type weed eaters, loppers clippers,or even power saws, axes, or machetes. A sawtooth shovel is an excellent tool for digging out the roots. Blackberries in forest overstory can often be pulled up by their roots in loose or moist soil, especially first year plants. |
| **Goats and Sheep** | Goats are ideal for browsing blackberries, because they will consume the entire plant year round. Sheep will eat blackberries but not to the same extent as goats. 3-4 animals per acre should do it. Economical for rough terrain. |
| **Regular Mowing** | Once the canes are cut, regular mowing or removing the canes can weaken and kill the vines within a few years. If removing blackberries from a field, overseed with grass as soon as canes are cut. The grass will compete with blackberry seedlings. |
| ***Chemical*** | ***There are no safe and effective chemical controls for Himalayan blackberry.*** |
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| | |

## *Try These Products*

- Blade-type weed eaters (not string)
- Lopper
- Sawtooth Shovel

## *Tips for pesticide application*

Many pesticides pose a risk to people, pets, and the environment. The ones effective against mature blackberries are not safe enough to use to be listed here.

## *Grow Smart, Grow Safe®*

Learn about the hazards associated with specific pesticide products at *GrowSmartGrowSafe.org*.

Puget Sound Starts Here.org

*Pest control that's safer for your kids, pets, and the environment!*

# Himalayan Blackberry

## Preventing Himalayan Blackberry—your best defense!

| | |
|---|---|
| **Keep them off your property** | Maintaining a healthy native plant community is the best way to prevent invasive plants from moving in and taking over. Keep meadows mowed. Encourage a closed canopy over wooded areas, as blackberries like sun. |
| **Get them while young** | If you spot Himalayan blackberries coming up on your property, remove them before they establish large root systems. You can put them in your home compost. |
| **Don't let them go to berries** | Eliminate flowers before they form berries. This will reduce their spread by seeding around existing plants, and through wildlife eating the berries and spreading them that way. |
| | |

Sawtooth shovel

Blackberry flowers

Thornproof glove

## Use of Toxic Pesticides

Pesticides that are commonly used to kill Himalayan blackberry include Tricloypyr and 2,4-D, both of which can be harmul to people, pets, and wildlife.

Triclopyr acts as a synthetic growth hormone which causes rapid plant growth followed by death. Since Triclopyr is considered mobile and moderately persistent it has potential to leach into soil and groundwater. Triclopyr can harm birds and small animals which feed on the blackberries if they have been sprayed with this chemical.

2,4-D is thought to increase cell plasticity and the rate of protein and ethylene production; resulting in abnormally rapid cell division and lethal tissue damage. Potential exposures to adults mixing and applying 2,4-D products is rated high in hazard for toxicity in Thurston County's review.

Ingredients in many common insecticides can pose a significant threat to people, pets, and the environment. Understand the risks by visiting Grow Smart, Grow Safe®: www.growsmartgrowsafe.org

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www.gardengreen.org

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