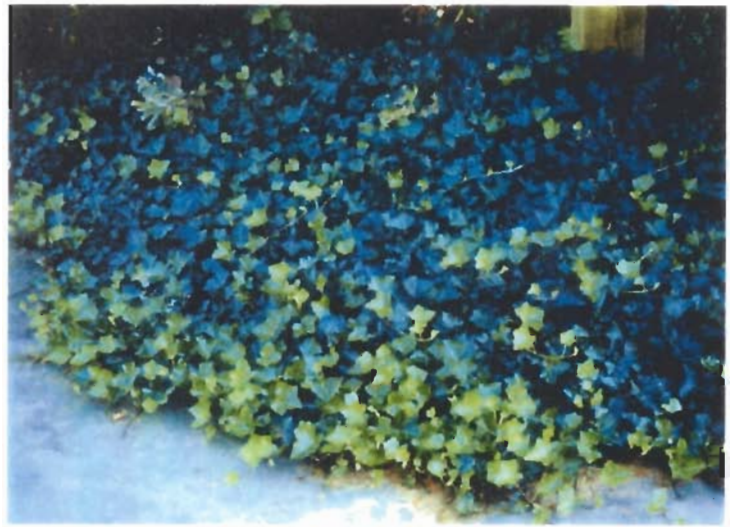


# English Ivy

## (*Hedera helix*)

**Identification:** Leaves are dark green and waxy, typically have 3 to 5 points, and vary in size from 3 to 10 inches. Inconspicuous flowers are followed by dark purplish-black fruits which birds eat, dispersing the seed to new areas. English ivy eventually forms thick, fibrous mats on the ground,



choking out all other plants. It is most aggressive when climbing trees, where the stems can become large and woody, sometimes reaching diameters of a foot or more. These thick stems produce many small aerial rootlets which hold fast to the tree. Eventually, even the largest tree is killed in competition for light and nutrients.

**Removal:** The first and most important step is to cut any stems that are climbing trees, since this is where it grows most vigorously and produces seed. Because the seeds are spread by birds, this is a vital step both in preventing new infestations and in containing the ivy in its present area. Once the climbing vine has been cut, either its roots must be dug out of the ground, or, to ensure that the roots will die, the cut surface of the stump end must be treated within a minute or so with a 1:1 solution of Roundup to water. Hand removal of plants on the ground is easiest in the winter and spring when soil is damp; stems can be pulled up one at a time or in clumps and traced back to their roots.

**Disposal:** English ivy can be left in piles to decompose, but piles in direct contact with the ground should be checked for resprouting.

**Follow-up:** A re-visit to the site after several months will reveal resprouting from any roots which were missed the first time. English ivy grows slowly, and once the roots have been eliminated the only follow-up necessary should be annual monitoring, with re-pulling of any new seedlings or regrowth.