

Himalayan Blackberry Manual Control Prescription

Blackberry Reproduction:

- Reproduces by seed (which can remain viable in the soil for many years) as well as vegetatively (root and stem fragments)
- Begins flowering in spring; fruit in mid-late summer
- Daughter plants can form where canes touch the ground

Planning:

- Map the area, set priorities for control, monitor the success of control, and implement follow-up control
- Plan the control to minimize soil disturbance
- Preserve any native species
- Plant native species after most of the infestation has been controlled

Control Options:

*Manual Control – hand-pulling and digging – **only effective for small infestations***

- Manual control works best after rain or in loose soils
- Cut above ground portion of blackberry with loppers or pruners. Dig up or pull the remaining root ball with a claw mattock/pulaski
- For first year plants, you may be able to hand-pull stem closest to the ground and uproot the root ball

*Mechanical Control – mowing, cultivation, targeted grazing with goats- **for large infestations***

- Mow with a riding mower or tractor-mounted mower, weed-eater, brush-mower, or machete (note that this may also harm desirable species)
- If possible, mow several times a year over several years to exhaust the roots of their reserve food supply
- If only one mowing is done per year, cut when the plants begin to flower
- If possible, following mowing, dig up the root-ball
- Cultivation (i.e., tilling the soil) is effective in certain situations, but causes soil disturbance
- Targeted grazing with goats (i.e., essentially using goats in place of a mower) is another option – hire a reputable targeted grazing company who will set up the appropriate mechanisms to keep the goats from eating native vegetation

Disposal:

- Collect plant crowns and rootballs and discard with the trash or yard waste or taken to a

transfer station for disposal. Composting of rootballs is not recommended.

- Stems can be composted, but they will root on moist soil so store on a tarp until completely dried out or chipped up before composting. Dried out stems may be composted on site or disposed of in a city–provided yard waste container.
- Stems with berries should be collected and put in the trash, yard waste container, or taken to a transfer station. If removal is not feasible, these stems can be left on site, however there is a risk of spread from the seeds, so the area should be monitored for several years for seedlings. Stems should be left well away from waterways and un–infested areas.
- Never dump yard waste in parks or natural areas, as weeds may spread from yard waste piles.

Follow up:

- Plant with native vegetation and mulch, or re-seed with grass species
- Monitor site and control new growth when plants are still small

References:

King County Noxious Weed Control Program Website: www.kingcounty.gov/weeds