



THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

Noxious Weed Control

WHAT TO DO WITH OTHER “BAD WEEDS”

Some problem weeds are not on Thurston County's list for free disposal. The reasons vary with species: Knotweed should not be transported from its original infestation site because of the risk of plant material starting new infestations anywhere it might land along the way. Also, as with other plants such as English Ivy, Scotch broom and blackberries, the sheer volume and weight of the plant material would be many times above the allowance for Thurston County Noxious Weed Control's budget for weed disposal.

Knotweed unfortunately cannot be controlled successfully by using manual or mechanical methods. However, there are times when it might be unavoidably necessary to cut the stalks down. These stalks can be stacked on boards, taking care that the stalks stay dry and don't touch the ground. When they turn completely brown and are dry and light, you can assume they are dead and can then be chopped up or allowed to decompose naturally. Another method is to lay the stalks flat immediately over the area that they were cut, then cover the entire area with tarps and weigh it down. The tarps must be heavy enough to exclude light. Again, this will not kill knotweed, and expect it to come up in force around the edges of the tarp.

Scotch broom plants that are cut down, dug up or pulled with a weed wrench can be chipped for mulch provided they do not have ripe seed pods on them. If you can't chip them or if they do have seed pods on them, then you may need to find an area on your property that you can designate as a “sacrifice area”. This can be a place out of sight, behind some trees, or in a depressed area on your property, where you can stack the plants and allow them to decompose.

Blackberry vines are difficult to stack. One idea is to cut them into short lengths with loppers or a brush hog, then rake them onto tarps. Then drag the tarps into an area where they can be piled up and left to decompose. Monitor this area to make certain pieces haven't taken root. Cutting blackberries will not kill them, and can actually increase their vigor unless the roots are removed as well. Even then, expect regrowth and seedlings for several years.

English Ivy that has been removed manually can be piled up and left to dry out or covered to speed up the decomposition process. The “ivy log” technique can be very helpful when removing mats of ivy that cover large areas: Create ivy logs by pulling up and rolling ivy into a log. This work is best done by two or three “pullers”.

- Designate the area to be log rolled (Not too large or the log will be unliftable).
 - Scan for native plants and mark those difficult to see with a stick.
 - Form a line - shoulder to shoulder - facing away from the ivy mat.
 - Pull the edge up and toward you and begin to roll the matted vines as you pull.
 - As you fold over the first pull, reach down and pull again -- keeping the ivy rolling toward you in an even greater log.
 - Keep the length of the roll manageable, lopping the edges as you go.
 - After a few rolls, some pullers can move to the other side to push it.
 - When the log is big enough than it no longer rolls easily, lop the ends then move over to an area that's been pulled.
- (Text from the No Ivy League of Portland Oregon)

Burning dead, dry weed material (never green material and never toxic plants) can be an alternative to off-site disposal, but only in appropriate areas where outdoor burning is allowed. Check with your local fire station to get a burn permit, and please check air quality conditions before burning.

Scotch broom, English Ivy and blackberries can also be taken to the Waste & Recovery Centers if you do not have a place to handle them on your property, but they will not be accepted in free disposal program, and you will need to pay the same rate as you would for garbage.