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Weed control- Himalayan blackberry

While not officially a noxious weed and though the berries sure taste good, Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus discolor* or *R. procerus*) is one of the more damaging invasive species out there. Himalayan blackberry spreads by vegetative reproduction and by seed, some of which is dispersed by birds. It outcompetes desirables through dense canopy formation and high water sequestration.

To control large populations, first cut down the stems with a brush cutter or mower, several times a year. If only one pass is possible, mow as the plants begin to flower. Chopping of canes does not result in new growth from lateral roots but new sprouts will emerge from the root crown. To prevent this, remove the bulbous, gnarled mass of the crown, just a few inches below ground, with a claw mattock, pulaski or shovel. Though exhausting at times, manual removal is often quite effective. Small populations can be hand-pulled following a rain to facilitate removal of as much roots as possible. Follow up with mulch, then plant competitive, native species such as nootka rose. Monitor for resprouts.

Goats will effectively graze young populations or resprouts up to four years old, but they will only strip off the leaves and ignore the tough canes of older plants. Palatability of this weed is relatively low so limit access to alternative browse. Root crowns must be addressed with another method of control.

Chemically control Himalayan blackberry with a 2% solution of glyphosphate applied to the leaves. Herbicides are most effective following seed set but while the plants are still actively growing (August through September). Subsequent treatments should occur before the first frost. The cut-stump treatment can also be employed, beginning in late spring. Cut each cane and immediately drench the cut surface with 1-2% glyphosphate. With a lower concentration of herbicide the individual plant is able to continue functioning long enough to translocate the chemical to the roots. Several treatments may be necessary.

Himalayan blackberry is somewhat intolerant of evergreen shade. While dense year-round shade may not completely eliminate a population of blackberry, the number of individuals will decrease, vigor will decline and seed production will drop. An effective means of long-term control of this invasive is to restrain the existing population long enough for newly planted evergreen trees and shrubs to become established.

To dispose of cutting debris, make large on-site piles on a thick layer of cardboard. This will provide a wildlife habitat feature while the piles quickly break down. Even large piles will usually fully decompose within one year. Cutting debris can also be fed through a chipper and used as mulch. These methods of disposal should only be used on material that was cut before seed set.

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