



Invasive Plants Found in Seattle's Parks

Seattle Urban Nature Project (SUNP) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enriching the quality of life in the Puget Sound Region by engaging communities to improve urban forests. Since 1999, SUNP has surveyed and monitored habitat conditions on public lands in the Seattle area. For more information about our current or past projects, please visit www.seattleurbannature.org.

English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) is one of the most well-known invasive plants in our urban forests. This climbing vine can suffocate trees by climbing into the canopy. It also forms a dense ground cover which impedes all other plants from growing, creating an "ivy desert". English ivy is the second most invasive plant on Seattle's public lands.



English ivy

Wild clematis (*Clematis vitalba*) is a climbing vine which can grow into the canopy of trees forming a dense mat. Its seeds are spread by wind and water, and it can root from stem nodes to produce new plants. It is in the top five most invasive plants affecting Seattle's urban forests.



Wild clematis
(Image © 2000, Fred Weinmann)

Knotweed (*Polygonum spp.*) Several species of knotweeds (Japanese, Bohemian, Himalayan) are posing a serious threat to wetland and riparian areas in King County. This escaped ornamental plant spreads by rhizomes and seeds. Knotweed forms thickets along stream banks which can clog waterways and displace native plants. It is one of the top ten invasive plants affecting Seattle's parks and open spaces.



Knotweed

Bittersweet nightshade (*Solanum dulcamara*) is a poisonous vine which grows in wet areas in our urban forests. It is commonly grown as an ornamental plant in gardens. Much like English ivy, this vine can form dense mats on the ground, excluding other native plants and reducing the quality of wildlife habitat for native animals and birds.



Bittersweet nightshade
(Image © 2004, Ben Legler)

Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and **hedge false bindweed** (*Calystegia sepium*) are climbing vines which form a thick ground cover and climb into the canopy of woody plants. These plants spread by rhizomes and can sprout from fragments left in the soil. The vigorous growth of the plants can smother both herbaceous and woody plants. Bindweed is one of the top ten most invasive plants affecting Seattle's urban forests.



Hedge false bindweed
(Image © 2004, Ben Legler)

Yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) is a popular horticultural groundcover which grows in low-light conditions in our urban forests. A relatively new threat, this plant can form extensive colonies which exclude all other plants.



Yellow archangel