

# Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus* (European blackberry)



<b>Species Name</b>		<i>Rubus vestitus</i> <sup>1, 2, 3</sup> (RUVE <sup>1, 2</sup> )	<b>Common Name</b>	European blackberry
<b>Family:</b> Rosaceae		<b>Synonyms:</b>	Common name <sup>7, 15</sup> - bramble, wild blackberry, shrubby blackberry	
<b>Form:</b> Subshrub/vine			Former species name- <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	
<b>Habitat:</b> <sup>4, 5, 7</sup> Woodland edges, scrub and hedgebanks, roadsides, waste/disturbed areas, grasslands, and riparian areas, especially open to fairly shaded locations with moist calcareous or clay, occasionally on acidic, soils.				
<b>Occurrence:</b> <sup>1, 2, 6</sup> Oregon and Washington, USA & British Columbia, Canada			<b>Native range:</b> <sup>4, 5, 6</sup> United Kingdom to northern Europe	
<b>Flowering time</b> - <sup>5, 14</sup> April to September			<b>Weed class:</b> OR- N/A, WA- N/A, BC- N/A	
<b>Weed ID*:</b> <sup>3, 4, 5, 16</sup> Scrambling deciduous/partly evergreen woody vine/shrub with biennial prickly canes 8-10 m long (26-33 ft), reaching up to 2 m (6.5 ft) in height, stems turning deep purple in sun, and moderately dense prickles all over stem that are long but fairly slender and patent (~45° to axis) to slightly declining and along slight stem ridges/angles, with dense white glandular hairs especially visible in young and inflorescence stems. Palmate leaves with 3-5 leaflets, feel relatively soft & thick due to short hairs above (along veins) & layer of whitish to grey felting below. The terminal leaflet is a little longer than wide (8 x 6 cm), can be almost round in shape (subcordate) with terminal leaves suborbiculate to orbiculate. Leaves evenly serrate-dentate with undulate margin, & a short triangular (acuminate to cuspidate) apex. Lateral flowering branches have 3-foliolate and simple leaves (like the terminal leaflet of primary canes) below most of the flowers. Panicle of white to pink relatively large flowers (2.5-3 cm across) on hairy axes with stalked glands, acicles & pricklets, with 5 broadly elliptical rounded petals (10-13 mm long) and 5 reflexed, stellate hairy sepals. Stamens are longer than the styles and on deeper pink flowers may also be pink at the base of the filaments. Sepals may be reflexed after petal fall if not before. <sup>4</sup> Fruit matures to dark almost-black berry in a rounded head up to 15 mm, of about 40 single-seeded drupelets. Roots are branched & stout with many secondary roots. *ID from others of the <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> L. aggregate group (a subgenus <i>Rubus</i> ) can be confused due to the group being apomictic, hybridizing, and numerous, with <i>R. vestitus</i> considered a "stable biotype" by the Biological Flora of the British Isles. <sup>4, 5, 6</sup>				
<b>Look-a-likes:</b> <sup>14</sup> see photos below <i>Rubus armeniacus</i> (Himalayan blackberry)- non-native, <i>Rubus bifrons</i> (European/Himalayan blackberry)- non-native, <i>Rubus ulmifolius</i> (elm-leaf/Himalayan blackberry)- non-native.				
<b>Weed distinction</b> <i>Rubus armeniacus</i> has smoother, greener & more angular stems, with bigger & fewer prickles, oval leaflets with prickles along mid-rib underside, slightly smaller flowers (2-2.5 cm). <i>Rubus bifrons</i> and <i>ulmifolius</i> - <i>R. vestitus</i> has long-stipitate-glandular hairs, particularly on the flower stem, and terminal primocane leaflets that are typically suborbiculate and abaxially densely tomentose.				
<b>Ecological Impact:</b> Reproduces readily by seed & vegetatively, rapidly forming dense thickets that shade out natives, change habitat structure and, potentially threatening communities of conservation significance in Washington's western Cascades region. <sup>3, 6</sup> Seeds are spread by birds & mammals. <sup>5</sup> "Well established in certain localities within the Pacific Northwest in the U.S. but little is known about its specific impacts, trends, and management difficulty". <sup>6</sup> <i>R. fruticosus</i> spp. are ranked as the fourth most serious weed of New Zealand. <sup>3</sup>				

## Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus*

**Control Methods** \*lack of research on *R. vestitus* require the substitution of *R. armeniacus* for many control methods.

### Large Scale:

#### Chemical

- **Triclopyr**<sup>23</sup> (alone or with picloram) can be effective against *R. fruticosus* spp.<sup>11, 20</sup>

#### Timing

- Late summer to fall when natives are senesced<sup>18</sup>. Fall application had better control than spring treatment in *Rubus* spp experiments<sup>22</sup>.
- Winter application to *R. fruticosus* spp has shown protection of deciduous undergrowth.<sup>20</sup>
- **Glyphosate** is effective on *Rubus* spp<sup>10, 21, 23</sup>. Apply in spring to fall while actively growing<sup>12, 21</sup> with fall potentially being best<sup>23</sup>.
- **Metsulfuron** applied spring or fall provided 85% control of blackberry. Similar **chlorosulfuron** also had good control and was better for a bahagrass below the blackberry.<sup>22</sup>
- **Fluroxypyr + picloram (or triclopyr)** mixtures were found to have 83% control on blackberry when applied in the fall and 65% when in spring.<sup>22</sup>
- **Imazapyr** can be used on various blackberry species, taking care with application near non-target plants as it may be absorbed or even passed between roots (apply beyond the dripline of trees).<sup>10</sup>

**Grazing** – early studies have found good control of *R. armeniacus* by horse, cattle and sheep grazing, in order of increased control (daughter plant production post grazing). Goats can also reduce blackberry.<sup>12, 21</sup>

**Mowing/Cutting** - removal of top growth will eventually kill blackberry plants with frequent retreatment for several years to deplete, and prevent replenishing root stores.<sup>3, 8</sup> Removal of the cut material is best since blackberries can regrow from fragments of shoots or roots.<sup>3</sup> Mowing twice per year (spring and fall) reduces blackberry abundance by over 70% after three years of treatments.<sup>18</sup>

- Cutting/mowing then spraying resprouts is recommended for effective treatment of a large thicket.<sup>18</sup>
- Cutting/mowing can also be combined with prescribed burns for good control.<sup>18, 21</sup>

**Prescribed burning** - A Willamette Valley experiment on *R. armeniacus* showed burning reduced cover by almost 70%, remaining reduced for two years. Prior mowing to reduce fuel load should be used for safety of personnel and native species.<sup>18</sup> Some evidence with *R. armeniacus* has shown potential spread of the blackberry in some prairies due to fires and recommend several treatments.<sup>19, 21</sup>

---

### Small Scale:

- Digging & pulling can be effective in small patches of *Rubus* spp. if most of root is removed or repeated for resprouts from missed roots occurs.<sup>8, 17, 18, 21, 23</sup>
- Cut-stump treatments with herbicide can also be applied to small patches with sensitive natives.<sup>21</sup>

## Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus*

### Unsuccessful control methods:

**Biological-** a rust disease caused by *Phragmidium violaceum* was recently investigated for several species formerly called *Rubus fruticosus* (all once known as European blackberry) and found ineffective as a control.<sup>9</sup>

Last Updated By: Lauren Clark

Date/Time: 9/24/2019

### References:

1. <https://plants.usda.gov/core/profile?symbol=RUVE>
2. <https://www.invasiveplantatlas.org/subject.html?sub=14091>
3. <https://www.cabi.org/isc/datasheet/47995>
4. <http://www.jnecology.com/rubus/vestitus.htm>
5. <https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2745.2005.01076.x>
6. <http://explorer.natureserve.org/servlet/NatureServe?searchName=Rubus+vestitus>
7. [https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/rubus\\_fruticosus\\_sp\\_\\_agg.htm](https://keyserver.lucidcentral.org/weeds/data/media/Html/rubus_fruticosus_sp__agg.htm)
8. <https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/animals-and-plants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/blackberry.aspx>
9. Bruckart, William L., Michael, Jami L., Sochor, Michal, and Trávníček, Bohumil. Invasive Blackberry Species in Oregon: Their Identity and Susceptibility to Rust Disease and the Implications for Biological Control. *Invasive Plant Science and Management*. Volume 10 (2). (2017) pp. 143-154. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/invasive-plant-science-and-management/article/invasive-blackberry-species-in-oregon-their-identity-and-susceptibility-to-rust-disease-and-the-implications-for-biological-control/3557705EAAB69DA1E3B121B90953CA2F>
10. <https://www.invasive.org/gist/products/handbook/methods-handbook.pdf>
11. Milne, BR, Dellow, JJ. Herbicide responses of blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* L. agg.) in Central Tablelands of New South Wales. *Plant Protection Quarterly*, 13(4):180-181; 7 ref. (1998)
12. Weed Management Guide- Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus* aggregate). *Natural Heritage Trust*. <http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/invasive/weeds/publications/guidelines/wons/pubs/r-fruticosus.pdf>
13. <http://web.ewu.edu/ewflora/Rosaceae/Rubus%20vestitus.html>
14. <http://biology.burke.washington.edu/herbarium/imagecollection/browse.php?Genus=Rubus>
15. <https://pfaf.org/user/plant.aspx?latinname=Rubus+fruticosus>
16. [http://beta.semanticfna.org/wiki/Rubus\\_vestitus](http://beta.semanticfna.org/wiki/Rubus_vestitus)
17. Blackberry Control Brochure. Weeds of National Significance. (2005). [https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/client.../Blackberry\\_Control\\_Brochure\\_wons.pdf](https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/client.../Blackberry_Control_Brochure_wons.pdf)
18. Dennehy, Casey; Alverson, Edward R., Anderson, Hannah E., Clements, David R., Gilbert, Rod et. al. Management Strategies for Invasive Plants in Pacific Northwest Prairies, Savannas, and Oak Woodlands. *Northwest Science*, 85(2): 329-351 (2011). <https://doi.org/10.3955/046.085.0219>
19. Anzinger, Dawn; Radosevich, Steven R., Radosevich. Chapter 10: Fire and Nonnative Invasive Plants in the Northwest Coastal Bioregion. *USDA Forest Service Gen. Tech. Rep.* 42 Vol 6. (2008).
20. Willoughby, Ian H., Harmer, Ralph; Morgan, Geoff W., & Peace, Andrew J. T riclopyr applied in the winter dormant season can give effective control of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* L. agg.) without damaging young tree seedlings or other non-target vegetation. *Forestry*. 86, 59-69 (2013)
21. Soll, Jonathan. Controlling Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus* [*R. discolor*, *R. procerus*]) in the Pacific Northwest. *The Nature Conservancy*. (2004).
22. Ferrell, J. A., Sellers, B. A., MacDonald, G. E., & Kline, W. N. Influence of Herbicide and Application Timing on Blackberry Control. *Weed Technology*. 23:531-534 (2009). [https://www.jstor.org/stable/40587126?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/40587126?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)
23. King County Noxious Weed Control Program. Himalayan Blackberry & Evergreen Blackberry. King County Noxious Weed Control Program BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES. (2014).

# Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus* (European blackberry)

## Photos:

habit



Leaves & underside



berries



(c) annetcurran, [some rights reserved \(CC BY-NC\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

stems



Ref #4- Copyright  
© John Norton, 2019

## Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus*

### Look-a-like:

Table 2.4. Summary of features distinguishing between *R. fruticosus* agg. (European origin) and North American *Rubus* species.

	EUROPEAN ORIGIN <i>R. fruticosus</i> agg.	NORTH AMERICAN <i>Rubus</i> SPECIES
<b>Inflorescence (collection of flowers at the apex of the floricane)</b>	In panicles (branched flower head) – Figure 2.1(A)	Not in panicles – Figure 2.1(B)
<b>Pedicel (flower stalk) length</b>	Mostly less than 1.5 cm – Figure 2.1(C)	Mostly more than 1.5 cm – Figure 2.1(D)
<b>Sessile (non-stalked) glands on primocane</b>	No sessile glands	With sessile glands
<b>Sepals (in fruit)</b>	Reflexed, bent backwards from the fruit – Fig 2.2	Not reflexed, surrounding the base of the fruit – Fig 2.2

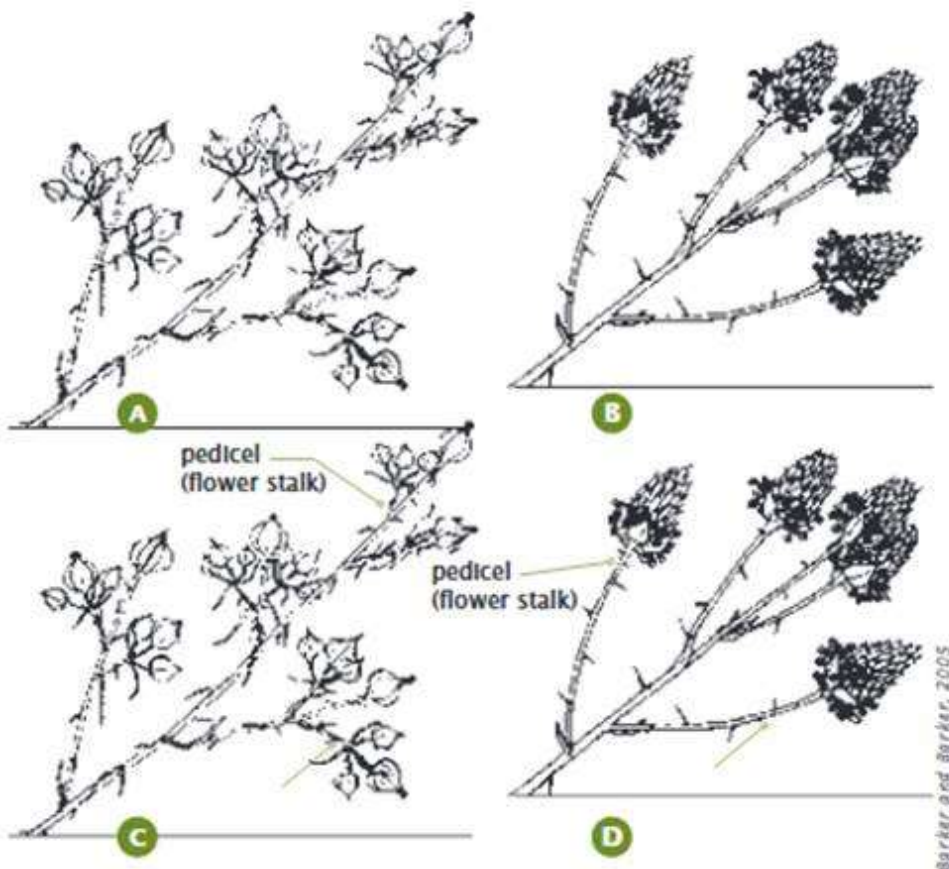


Figure 2.1 Inflorescence and pedicel length (see Table 2.4 for key).

Ref #17- [https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/client.../Blackberry\\_Control\\_Brochure\\_wons.pdf](https://www.nrmnorth.org.au/client.../Blackberry_Control_Brochure_wons.pdf)



Figure 2.2 Sepals reflexed (above) or non-reflexed (below).

## Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus*

Look-a-like:

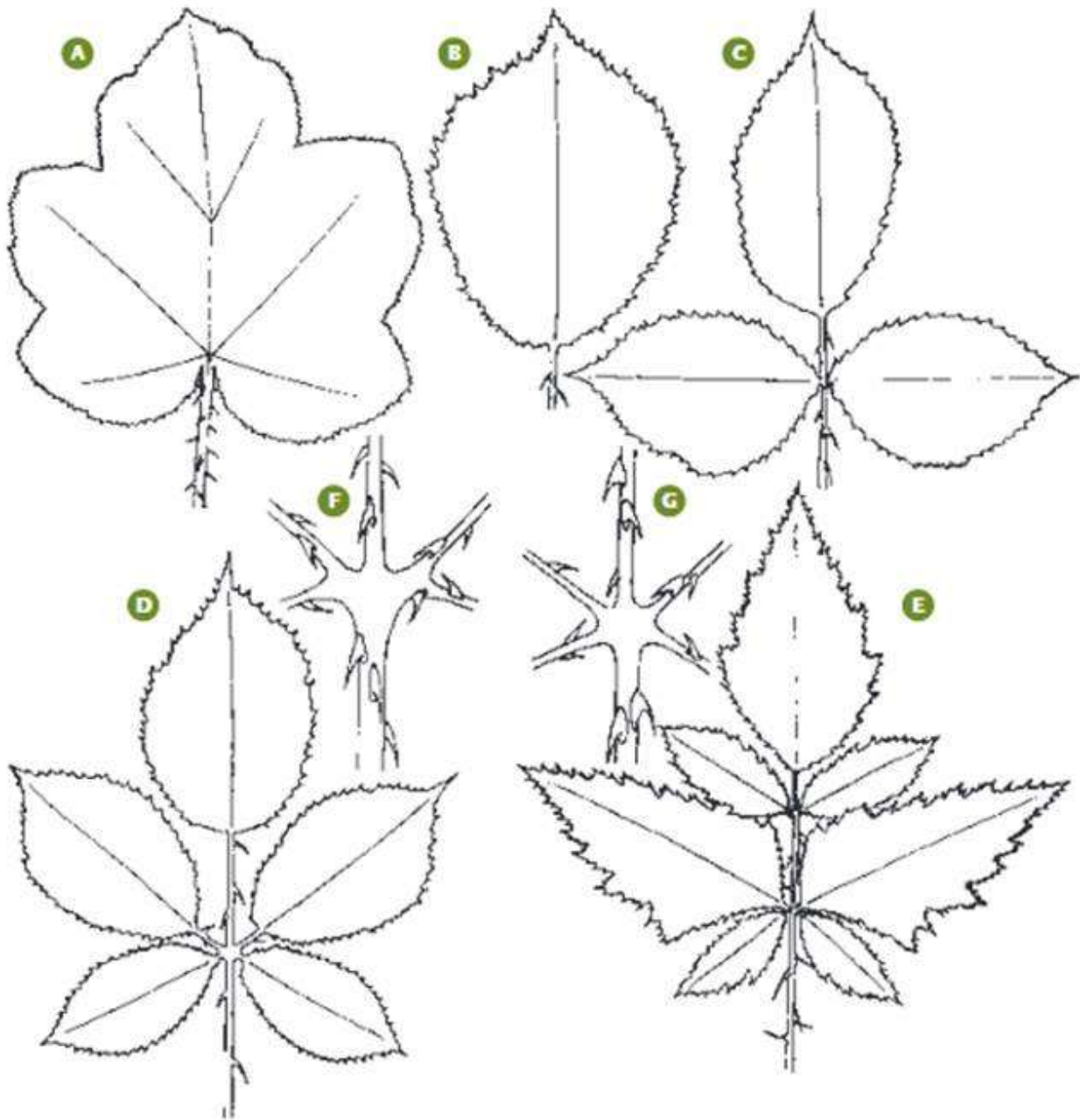


Figure 2.3 Leaf characteristics of *R. fruticosus* agg. and North American *Rubus* species in Australia. Drawing by Beth Chandler from Evans et al., 2007

A—entire lobed leaf as found in *R. rugosus*.

B—simple (reduced trifoliate) leaf found in the upper parts of the floricanes in many taxa of the *R. fruticosus* agg.

C—typical leaf found subtending base of most inflorescences in the *R. fruticosus* agg.

D—typical leaf found in taxa of the *R. fruticosus* agg.

E—pinnate leaf as found in *R. loganobaccus*, *R. idaeus* or *R. parvifolius*.

F—pedate arrangement of petiolules where the lowest pair of petiolules arises from the middle pair of petiolules as found in *R. leucostachys* or *R. riddelsdelli*.

G—digitate arrangement of petiolules where the petiolules of all leaflets arise from the same point on the petiole, for example, *R. anglocandicans*.

# Management Guide for *Rubus vestitus*

Look-a-like:

*Rubus armeniacus* – non-native



*Rubus ulmifolius* – non-native



*Rubus bifrons* – non-native

smooth stem

