

Common Blackberry

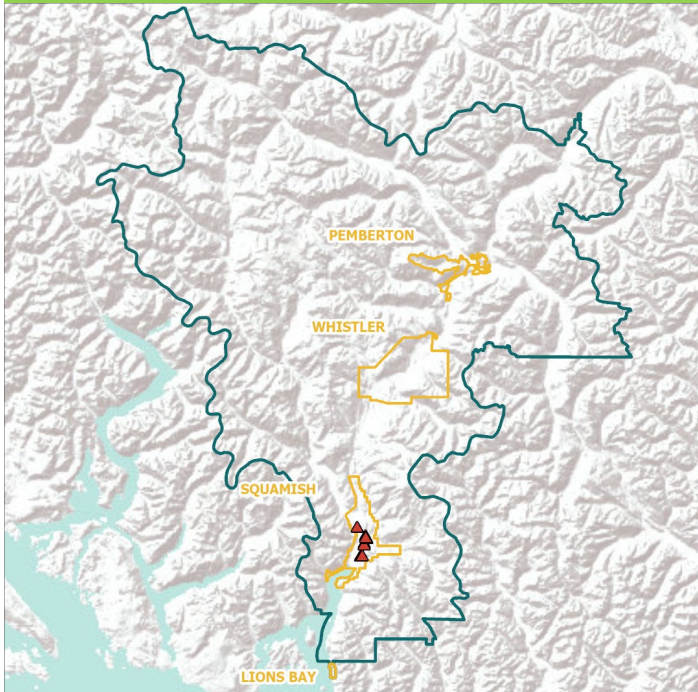
Rubus allegheniensis

(a.k.a. Allegheny Blackberry)

FACT SHEET

Squamish: Strategic Control | Whistler: Prevent | Pemberton: Prevent

DISTRIBUTION



Origin: Common Blackberry is native to Eastern North America. In Canada, it naturally occurs from Nova Scotia to Quebec; in the US, it grows from Minnesota south to North Carolina, Alabama, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

Common Blackberry is thought to have arrived in Western North America by escaping from cultivation.

Habitat: Common Blackberry thrives in a wide range of habitats, such as disturbed areas, dry upland pastures, forest plantations, roadsides, and forest edges.

It grows in a range of soil conditions but it is not tolerant of shade.

Reproduction: Common Blackberry can reproduce both by seed and vegetatively. Vegetative reproduction occurs by sprouting root buds and root developments on canes.

IDENTIFICATION



Growth Forms: Common Blackberry is a biennial bramble. The flowers and fruit only form on mature stems.

Flowers: Form in clusters of roughly 15 white flowers, each with 5 petals. Common Blackberry flowers only form on second year stems.

Stems: Upright to arched; canes are angled, branched and have curved prickles. Canes are biennial and can root along the stems and tips. Common Blackberry plants are 1 - 2 m tall.

Leaves: Medium to dark green, made of 5 leaflets that are deeply divided and look lobed with toothy margins. The leaves have hairy undersides.

Fruits: Mature, shiny blackberries ripen in late summer. Berries only form on second year stems.

Roots: Taproot.

Similar Species:

- **Native:** Trailing Blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), Black Raspberry (*Rubus leucodermis*)
- **Invasive:** Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), Cutleaf Evergreen Blackberry (*Rubus laciniatus*).

Cutleaf Evergreen Blackberry leaves are deeply divided with toothy margins. Himalayan Blackberry is taller (up to 3 m tall)

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Vectors of Spread: Common Blackberry spreads vegetatively by rooting from the cane tips touching the ground or from nodes along the cane. Common Blackberry seeds spread by birds and mammals eating the fruit and dispersing the seeds to new locations, as the seeds can remain intact through animals' digestive tracts.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Common Blackberry is limited in distribution in the Sea to Sky Region, PREVENTION of further spread is key:

- Regularly monitor properties for infestations.
- Maintain or establish healthy native plant communities that are resistant to invasion by invasive plants.
- Ensure soil and gravel is uncontaminated before transport.
- Don't unload, park, or store equipment or vehicles in infested areas; remove plant material from any equipment, vehicles, or clothing used in such areas and wash equipment and vehicles at designated cleaning sites before leaving infested areas.
- Minimize soil disturbances (e.g. use grazing plans that prevent soil exposure from overgrazing), and use seed mixes with dense, early colonization (e.g. alfalfa or barley) to re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill).
- **Do not place fruit material in the compost.**

Common Blackberry can be controlled by:

- **Mechanical Control:** Repeated cutting and mowing can keep plants from over-taking; however, cutting followed immediately by root removal is most effective. Pulling canes out of the ground before berry production also helps to control infestations.
- **Chemical Control:** It is recommended to treat infestations with glyphosate in the fall, while canes are actively growing, after berries have formed and before the first frost. Triclopyr, 2,4-D and metsulfuron also provide effective control. We recommend that any herbicide application is carried out by a person holding a valid BC Pesticide Applicator Certificate. Before selecting and applying herbicides, you must review and follow herbicide labels and application rates; municipal, regional, provincial and federal laws and regulations; species-specific treatment recommendations, and site-specific goals and objectives.
- **Cultural Control:** Long-term grazing by goats and pigs has been proven effective, and chickens can decrease the seed bank.
- **Biological Control:** There are no biocontrol agents available for this plant in BC.

If you suspect you have found Common Blackberry anywhere in the Sea to Sky region:

Contact the Sea to Sky Invasive Species Council to report and for the most recent, up to date control methods. All reports will be kept confidential.

References: Flora of North America, Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Illinois Wildflowers, Invasive Species Council of BC, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, Native Plant Trust, North Carolina State University, North Ontario Plant Database, Oregon State University, US Department of Agriculture Plants Database.

IMPACTS

Ecological:

- **Outcompetes native plants**
- **Reduces biodiversity**
- **Infests stream channels and banks**
- **Restricts the access of wildlife to water bodies**
- **Degrades pastures**
- **Increases the likelihood of erosion along banks**

Economic:

- **Reduces land value**
- **Limits recreational access to water bodies**
- **Reduces sight lines along infrastructure**



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REPORT SIGHTINGS

Visit ssisc.ca/report

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