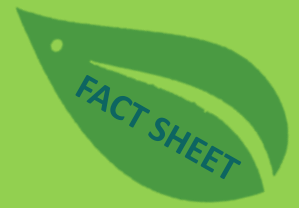


English Holly

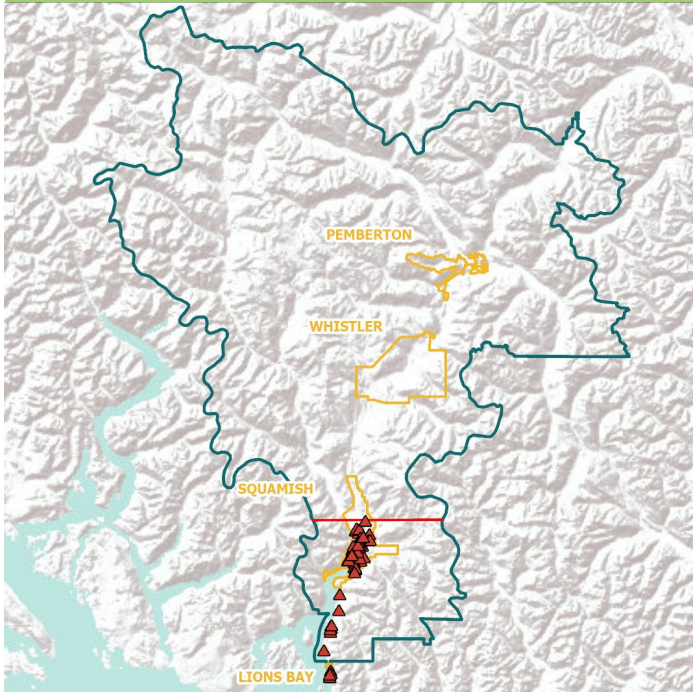
Ilex aquifolium

(A.K.A. Christmas Holly)



Squamish: Contain | Whistler: Prevent | Pemberton: Prevent

DISTRIBUTION



Origin: English Holly comes from the British Isles as well as Southern and Central Europe.

Habitat: English Holly is adaptable to a wide range of soil, moisture, temperature and light conditions. It is often found in mixed deciduous forests, wetlands and near residential areas. It can survive in both sunny and shady conditions and grows best in sandy or well-drained soils.

Reproduction: English Holly reproduces by seed as well as vegetatively. One shrub can produce 120,000 seeds annually. It can resprout from cut stumps, suckering (sending up shoots from the roots) and layering (growing the roots from where stems touch the ground).

IDENTIFICATION



K. Newell

Hardy perennial shrub with a single trunk or multiple stems. It can live over 250 years; older plants (> 10 years) are very hardy.

Flowers: Small, white, inconspicuous and smell slightly sweet.

Stems: Erect, tall shrub (2 - 5 m). Young plants have green bark which turns smooth and grey-silver at maturity.

Leaves: Dark green, glossy, leathery, alternate, evergreen and egg-shaped, 2.5 - 6 cm long. Young leaves have stiff, sharp spines on the leaf margins; mature leaves may have smooth leaf margins and fewer spines, if at all.

Fruits: Round, smooth, bright red or orange berries, 7 - 8 mm wide. They grow in clusters and contain 2 - 8 seeds each.

Caution: Berries are poisonous to humans and pets.

Roots: Woody and long.

Similar Species:

- **Native:** Tall Oregon Grape (*Mahonia aquifolium*), Dull Oregon Grape (*Mahonia nervosa*)
- **Exotic:** San Jose Holly (*Ilex x aquipernyi* 'San Jose')

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Vectors of Spread: Long-distance dispersal can occur through birds that eat the English Holly berries. Short-distance spread occurs by vegetative reproduction. English Holly is also spread by nursery sales, as it is a popular holiday decoration.

WHAT CAN I DO?

English Holly can be found in Squamish, but not in Whistler or Pemberton, so PREVENTION of further spread is key:

- Regularly monitor properties for weed infestations.
- Do not purchase or plant English Holly.
- Ensure soil and gravel are 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, and re-vegetate exposed soil and resist invasion.
- Ensure plants (particularly flowering heads, berries or root fragments) are bagged or covered to prevent spread during transport to designated disposal sites (e.g. landfill). **Do NOT compost.**

English Holly can be controlled by:

- **Mechanical Control:** Hand-pull small plants when the soil is moist. Larger plants may need mechanical tools to remove, or be excavated. Ensure the entirety of the root system is removed whenever possible, but be prepared to treat the site repeatedly. For large plants, it helps to cut down the above-ground vegetation before digging the roots out. Remove roots and stems from the site and dispose of them to prevent the cut Holly from re-rooting. Wear eye protection, long pants, long sleeves, sturdy footwear and work gloves to avoid scratches or injury from the prickly leaves. It is best to remove Holly before the berries mature; otherwise, make sure you plan for berry removal.
- **Chemical Control:** The application of glyphosate, imazapyr or triclopyr to cut stumps is an effective chemical control method. Where permitted, glyphosate can also be applied using stem injection or foliar application. However, English Holly's preference for riparian habitats makes using chemical control extremely difficult. 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.
- **Biological Control:** There is no biocontrol agent available at this time.

If you suspect you have found English Holly 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: Coastal Invasive Species Committee, eFlora, Invasive Plant Atlas, Invasive Species Council of British Columbia, King County Government, Metro Vancouver Regional District, Noxious Weeds Control Board of Washington.

IMPACTS

Health:

- **Berries are poisonous to humans and pets.**

Ecological:

- **Forms dense monocultures that push out native plants; suppresses germination and growth.**
- **Creates shade that deprives native plants of light.**
- **Roots hog nutrients and water, which prevents other plants from growing in its vicinity.**
- **Modifies soil conditions by adding a significant amount of organic matter and sulfur, making it difficult for native plants to thrive.**
- **Flammable leaves pose a fire risk.**



REPORT SIGHTINGS

Visit ssisc.ca/report

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