

**Project:** 52 Avenue Road, NW8 6HP

### **Summary**

Hedera Helix (Ivy) is widespread throughout Britain and a component of mixed scrub communities.

Being shade tolerant, it will ramble over and under stands of scrub. Where it compromises interest by suppressing regeneration of scrub and herbaceous flora, then management will be required.

### **Distribution and status**

Hedera Helix (Ivy) is a common plant throughout the whole of Britain and grows on all but the most acidic, very dry or waterlogged soil up to altitudes of 610 m. It is very tolerant of shade and will flourish in the darkest of closed canopy scrub.

### **Identification**

Hedera Helix (Ivy) will climb as well as sprawl over the floor. The stems have fine sucker-like roots that adhere well to any surface. The young stems are downy. The smooth glossy green leaves are darker above and have pale veins. The leaves of non-flowering stems have 3-5 triangular-shaped lobes. On flowering shoots, the leaves are oval to elliptical.

The small greenish-yellow flowers only form at the tips of shoots growing in well-lit conditions. The fruit is a small globular black berry.

### **Growth characteristics**

- Sucker-like roots enable it to attach to most horizontal and vertical substrates.
- Shoots from surface roots, cut and layered stems.

### **Value to wildlife**

Valuable to wildlife, for example:

Invertebrates:

- 5 species recorded feeding.
- 2 species feeding exclusively.
- Valuable autumn nectar source.
- A food plant of the Holly Blue butterfly.

Birds:

- Late winter/early spring fruits eaten by birds.

## **Examples of management techniques to implement example objectives**

(Key: En = Enhance; M = Maintain; R = Reduce; Er = Eradicate)

### **Objectives Management techniques**

#### **1 Enhance or maintain stands using livestock:**

En/M A Light browsing of the scrub edge in late spring where ivy is a component may encourage bushy growth and fruiting.

#### **2 Enhance or maintain stands mechanically:**

En/M A Hedera Helix (Ivy) layers and shoots from cut stems and surface roots. Where it is a component species, manage it within the rotation of the stand. If necessary, lightly trim after fruiting in late spring to encourage bushy growth and flowering. Check for nesting birds and other fauna before carrying out work

#### **3 Reduce or eradicate established scrub mechanically:**

Hand pull or use weed pullers to clear young plants. Clear using mechanical tools where conditions allow.

### **Site Specific Maintenance**

- Feeding every two weeks during the spring and summer seasons, using a 20-20-20 fertilizer.
- Monitor the plant's growth regularly. Landscape team to redirect any wayward vines back to the support to encourage vertical growth. Prune any excess growth to maintain a tidy appearance and prevent tangling.
- Cutting/Pulling with pruning shears or hand saws where needed.
- During winter/colder climates, protect the roots by mulching around the base of the plants. This insulates the roots and helps prevent them from freezing. Protection from winter winds by keeping it moist throughout the Autumn.
- Moist soil and dry foliage will help English ivy survive the colder season.