Pledge to Remove English Ivy

Take Our Pledge to Remove English Ivy From Your Property

English ivy is an invasive plant that is commonly used as a ground cover. It spreads rapidly, kills trees, and damages property. We are currently working to remove English ivy from trees on park lands, but we need your help to remove ivy throughout the Rock Creek watershed. Please **take our pledge** to remove English ivy from your property and prevent its spread.

English ivy is a major threat to the health of the trees around Rock Creek in Montgomery County and the District. I pledge to remove English ivy from my property and to protect my trees from its spread.

Click here to take the pledge!

Why English Ivy?

Ivy can kill trees and other plants by stealing sunlight and nutrients, attracting fungus, and weighing down branches causing them to break.

The roots of English ivy penetrate cracks in mortar, stucco, and concrete and grow under siding and shingles.

Ivy provides an excellent habitat for rats and mosquitoes, but few other animals make use of the plant.

How to Identify English Ivy

English ivy is a woody, evergreen vine that trails along the ground and climbs trees and structures. Leaves are generally dark green, but variations are common, and have 3-5 lobes. Stems and root structures have smooth bark with coarse brown hairs.

How to Remove English Ivy

At the base of trees, use garden clippers and a hand saw to cut all ivy vines in a ring around the tree trunk. Remove the cut section ensuring that you can see the bark of the tree. Do not pull the vines off the tree because this can damage the bark of the tree. The vines will die back and fall off the tree.

Along the ground, English ivy has a shallow root system and can be pulled up.

On buildings and other structures, cut a gap in the ivy vines and pull all vines from the ground around the building. Do not pull vines off of the structure as you can cause damage to the exterior of the building. The vines will die back and fall off over time.

Alternative Ground Covers

If you prefer to plant ground covers in your yard, choose native plants that are adapted to growing in your area and provide food and habitat for animals. If your garden is shaded, try Phlox stolonifera (creeping phlox), Tiarella condifolia (foam flower), Asarum canadense (wild ginger), Hydrastis canadensis (goldenseal), Huechera americana (American alumroot), or Cardamine diphylla (crinkleroot). Ferns such as Polystichum acrostichoides (Christmas fern), Adiantum pedatum (northern maidenhair fern), Athyrium filix-femina (northern lady fern) and Osmunda cinnamomea (cinnamon fern) are also good choices. In sunny areas, try Ascelpias syriaca (common milkweed), Lonicera sempervirens (trumpet or colar honeysuckle), Phlox subulata (moss phlox), Vernonia noveboracensis (New York ironweed), or Salvia lyrata (lyreleaf sage).

For more information on alternatives to English ivy, the Virginia Native Plant Society has recommendations for several different types of landscaping. Here's the link: [Alternatives to English Ivy](#).