

Shiny Geranium

Invasive Species Alert Sheet



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Regional Invasive Species Program

The spread of non-native invasive plants has serious ecological, economic and health impacts. Local governments and other partners are asking for help from all residents to report and address shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*) outbreaks on private property and public lands. This plant is a high priority to eradicate before further spread occurs.

Please report all plants!

Shiny geranium is native to Eurasia and Northern Africa. In British Columbia, shiny geranium is found in the Capital Region, and in a few sites in the Lower Mainland. Within the capital region, there are patches in Langford, North Saanich, Otter Point, Saanich, Victoria and on Salt Spring Island.

Why is shiny geranium a problem?

- **Displaces native vegetation** through aggressive and rapid spread, decreasing foraging capability for wildlife and decreasing local plant biodiversity, also increases erosion
- **Threatens species at risk** by dominating habitats and altering vegetation
- **Dominates understorey** in home gardens, parks, and other habitats
- **Can contaminate plant nursery stock** and be accidentally introduced

What does it look like?

- **Flowers:** small, pink with five petals, round at tip, in pairs on short stems, intermixed with leaves, hairless and keeled sepals
- **Stems:** grow up to 50cm tall from weak, central root, smooth, turns red as it matures
- **Leaves:** shiny/waxy appearance, round to kidney shaped, 5-7 coarsely toothed lobes
- **Seeds:** 2mm long, smooth, oval, reddish colour with black projection
- **Roots:** branched, tender and shallow, whitish in colour



Could be confused with:

- ***G. molle* (dovesfoot):** stem is pink, reddens with age, stiff and fuzzy (not smooth), petals have a shallow notch at the tips, soft and hairy flower, leaves fuzzy and dull (not shiny)
- ***G. robertianum* (herb robert):** stems hairy, triangular leaf outline, leaves fern-like divided into 3-5 segments, strong leaf odour
- ***G. dissectum* (crane's bill):** stem is stiff, hairy and not red, leaves divided like a palm into 5-7 segments, leaves deeply cut near the base into linear segments, petals shallowly notched at the tips (not rounded), sepals equal to petals, bristle-tipped

Habitat and biology:

- Usually grows as an annual, but can live for up to two years. A member of the geranium (Geraniaceae) family.
- Can tolerate diverse conditions, but prefers semi-open habitats with moderate sun
- Blooms March to July depending on growing conditions. Most seeds germinate in the fall, but can germinate in the spring whenever moisture and temperature is favourable.
- Seeds viable up to 5 years and are ejected up to 6+ metres without wind, easily trapped in boots, paws, tires etc.
- Local dispersal by wind, wildlife, humans and water. Vehicles, equipment, contaminated seed, plants and fill material are primary sources for unintentional spread.

What to do if you spot a shiny geranium plant:

- **Prevent:** don't buy, grow or trade this plant
- **Report:** report all outbreaks to the contacts below for support and monitoring. Search for isolated plants and small patches – every plant is important to report and remove!
- **Remove:** if you have an outbreak on your property, follow the instructions below for careful removal and follow up. Work to prevent seeding and limit further spread.
- **Prevent spread:** clean shoes, tools, clothing, vehicles, pets and equipment before leaving an infested site. Use clean landscaping supplies– buy local!
- **Monitor:** monitor for outbreaks, especially during bloom time May to July



For small infestations:

- **Manually remove** before seed dispersal from May to August. Pull gently to minimize soil disturbance and include the bulbous crown at the base of the stems so plants can't re-sprout. They are very easy to pull. If the site is suitable, mulch the area in the fall.
- **To prevent spread**, first remove plants growing in full sun or shallow soil, and from high-traffic areas. Begin at the outer edges of a patch and work back to the centre.
- **Seeds that are turning brown** and plants that are turning yellow or red will disperse seed earliest – deal with these first
- **Mulching:** To smother young plants and suppress the seed bank, spread a 3 – 4 inch layer of mulch around desired plants in garden areas. If the terrain permits, a layer of cardboard can be laid down before topping with organic mulch. Add a thin layer of mulch on top each subsequent year. Mulch can be used on dense patches in lawns, but needs to be in place for several years.

- **Disturbance with hoeing:** In deeper soil, especially in gardens, repeated scuffling during the germination period uproots young plants and minimizes later efforts to pull plants that re-root. Ensure this is done before flowers to go to seed.
- **Repeated mowing:** a short term solution only if done early in the season before seeds form, while preparing for other more lasting management methods
- **Monitor** for several years as the seedbank can survive and persist even after removal
- **Replant:** choose non-invasive or native species to replant

Large infestations:

- Larger patches can be controlled by covering with sheet mulch using cardboard and then mulch or woodchips to suppress growth
- Herbicides may be helpful depending on local and provincial regulations

Proper Disposal:

- Do not compost! Flowers can still form viable seeds after removal, and root fragments may persist.
- Put all plant material in strong/thick garbage bags and dispose. The best option is to take the bags labelled "invasive species" to the Hartland Landfill.



CONTACT INFORMATION

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