

# Evergreen, Himalaya, and Wild Blackberries



**HIMALAYA BLACKBERRY—*Rubus procerus***  
Showing leaves, stem, and flowers.

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# Evergreen, Himalaya, and Wild Blackberries

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Evergreen, himalaya, and wild blackberries are the most common blackberries found in Oregon. The evergreen and himalaya varieties are not native, but they have escaped cultivation and become wild in many areas.

Newcomers to the state marvel at the huge clumps of blackberries growing wild in pastures and on roadsides in western Oregon. Until recently, these formed an important source of income to some communities, but now the unsprayed berries of both the evergreen and himalaya varieties often are affected by the berry mite; this makes them hard, thus unsuitable for canning.

## Evergreen Blackberry

*Rubus laciniatus*

Evergreen blackberry is a perennial bush that spreads by seed, basal sprouting, and tip layering. The stems are long, very thorny, and reach  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in thickness. They may trail along the ground or grow in clumps 10 feet or more high and from 10 to 50 feet wide. The clumps spread so rapidly that they sometimes seriously encroach on pasture land. Leaves are divided into from 3 to 15 leaflets, except at the tips of branches where the leaves are often entire. Leaflets are cut into many long, slender lobes with many sharp thorns along the underside of the midvein. The flowers are white or pinkish and are borne singly from joints where the leaf stalks are attached to the main



Evergreen Blackberry

*Rubus laciniatus*

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stem. The fruit is shiny, black, and almost round. Seeds are rather large and hard.

## Himalaya Blackberry

*Rubus procerus*

Himalaya blackberry grows wild in all sections of western Oregon, but it is not a native. Like the evergreen, it is rank-growing and aggressive. There are usually three leaflets that are

rounded, have toothed edges, but are not divided. The canes reach one inch in thickness.

## Wild Blackberry

### *Rubus ursinus*

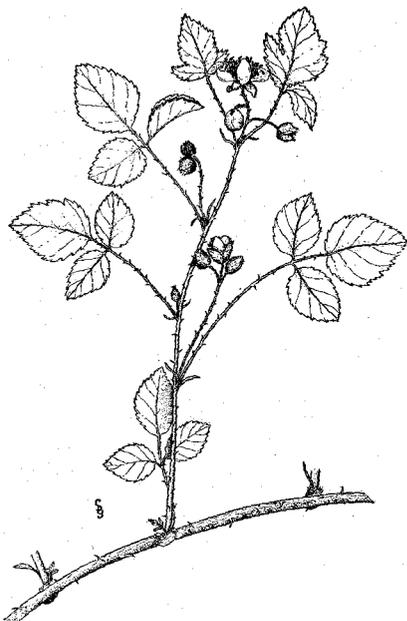
Other name: Trailing blackberry

Wild blackberry is a perennial. It produces woody stems up to 25 feet long that trail along the ground and reach  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch in thickness. The first year's growth is unbranched and does not flower, but the second year many flower-bearing branches are formed. The canes are biennial and die after the second year. The roots and crown are perennial. The stems are hairless or slightly hairy with short, curved prickles. Leaflets are egg-shaped in outline, pointed, roughly toothed, and somewhat hairy on both sides, especially on the underside. End leaflets are broader and longer (2 to 3 inches) than the side leaflets and often are somewhat lobed. Leaves are borne alternately along the stem and are usually divided into three leaflets. Flowers are white, have four petals, and are from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches across. Male and female flowers are produced on different plants.

Wild blackberry grows abundantly in cutover areas. It is also common in open woods, along roadsides, and in fence rows. This blackberry, together with bracken fern and fireweed, rapidly comes into an area that has been slashed and burned unless the burn is seeded down immediately to grass. It has fair to good palatability for both sheep and cattle.

## Chemical Control

Excellent chemicals for the control of all species of wild berry vines are: 2,4,5-T; mixtures of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T; and picloram (Tordon). Most chemical treatments and mechanical control



Wild Blackberry — *Rubus ursinus*  
Showing trailing stem, leaves, and flowers.

methods require respraying or retilling for complete plant control.

The recommended rate of 2,4,5-T and combinations of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T is 4 pounds (usually 1 gallon) of chemical in 100 gallons of water. The ester formulations of 2,4,5-T and combinations with 2,4-D are more effective for the control of brushy plants than are the amine formulations.

Berry vines, like most other brushy plants, are best controlled with water-carried foliage sprays which are applied soon after the vine is fully leaved out and while there is adequate moisture for rapid vine growth. The addition of wetting agents usually increases the effectiveness of chemicals like 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. Follow the recommendations on the label on quantities and kinds of wetting agents to use.

Complete coverage of the leaf area is important in controlling berry vines.

Equipment which applies sprays with excess of 100 pounds pressure is recommended for spraying dense brush. Frequently, higher pressures are needed to get good coverage of large berry patches. Boom sprayers can be adjusted for spraying low-growing berry vines or regrowth.

2,4,5-T and 2,4-D - 2,4,5-T combinations can be applied with diesel oil, stove oil, or special oils during the winter months when there are no leaves on the vines. This is known as dormant spraying, sometimes called basal spraying. The amount of active chemical is increased to 16 pounds (4 gallons) per 100 gallons of oil. For spot spraying, use 1 gallon for 25 gallons of oil. Dormant sprays should be directed at the lower half of the plant, concentrating the spray on the plant stems; they are recommended for use where nearby crops and plants might be damaged by foliage sprays. Usually, foliage sprays applied with water in spring or summer are cheaper and more effective than the oil-applied dormant sprays.

### **Picloram**

Picloram (Tordon) is available as liquid, pellets, and bead formulations. Unlike 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D, picloram is active in foliage applications and when applied directly to the soil. The most common liquid formulation is K22. This is a 2-pound-per-gallon chemical and is recommended for use at the rate of 1 gallon (2 pounds) per 100 gallons of spray. Complete spray coverage of the vines is recommended. Timing of picloram sprays is less exacting than the timing of 2,4,5-T and 2,4-D-2,4,5-T combinations. Excellent control has been obtained by spraying any time during the summer months.

When using the 10% pellets, 40 to 60 pounds of pellets are recommended

per acre (1 to 1½ pounds per 1,000 square feet). When using the 2.3% beads, 200 to 300 pounds are recommended per acre (5 to 7 pounds per 1,000 square feet). The active picloram is leached from the pellets and beads into the soil. Thus, timing of dry formulations depends on available moisture after treatment.

All formulations of picloram have soil residual activity for two to three years. Picloram must be used carefully when applied in areas where root systems of desired plants are growing. When using dry formulations, the material should be spread from the base of the plant to at least one foot beyond the spread of the branches.

### **Control With Soil Sterilants**

Soluble sterilants such as sodium chlorate, Atlacide, and borate-chlorate mixtures are effective in controlling blackberry plants. Such sterilants are easiest applied after cutting the old plants or by spraying on regrowth when it is approximately 2 feet high. Soluble soil sterilants should be applied in western Oregon during the late spring months when most of the winter rains are over, when 1 to 2 inches of moisture is expected. Such timing makes it possible to leach the active chemicals into the upper soil area.

Sodium chlorate and Atlacide should be used at 4 pounds per square rod. Polybor-chlorate is recommended at 8 to 10 pounds per square rod. Sodium chlorate is inflammable after being wet and drying on organic matter. Because of fire hazards, sodium chlorate should be applied only as a dry treatment. Sodium chlorate is poisonous, thus must be used carefully around livestock. Chlorates leach readily into the soil and are not a poisonous hazard when followed by one inch of rain.