

# Field Bindweed

*Convolvulus arvensis* Morning Glory Family

## Identification Tips

- Deep-rooted perennial vine, grows along ground until it comes in contact with other plants or structures; then climbs aggressively
- Smooth, arrowhead-shaped leaves
- Slender, twining stems can grow up to 6 feet long
- Light pink to white trumpet-shaped flowers
- 2 small leaf bracts about 1 inch below flower
- Fleshy, pale roots travel deeply and widely

## Biology

Reproduces vegetatively via roots, rhizomes, stem fragments, and seed. Seeds can lie dormant in soil 20 years or more. Roots spread widely underground, vertically and horizontally, forming dense mats. Flowering is indeterminate, so flowers continue to develop along stems until first frost.

## Impacts

Once established, nearly impossible to fully eradicate. Overwhelms crops and other plant species. Very difficult to control organically, so can greatly increase maintenance costs on organic farms. Dense infestations can reduce crop yields by up to 60 percent.

## Distribution

Found in fields, turf, and farmland, as well as residential settings such as flower gardens, rockeries, and ornamental borders. Can grow in a wide range of conditions, from full sun to full shade, and is drought-tolerant.

## What You Can Do

While there is no legal requirement to control field bindweed, the King County Noxious Weed Control Board recognizes that this plant is invasive. For this reason, the Board recommends control and containment of existing populations, especially near farming areas, where feasible.

## Control Methods

For best results, control methods should be used throughout several growing seasons. Success in controlling this weed requires prevention of seeds, competition from more desirable vegetation, and vigilance in removing new growth.

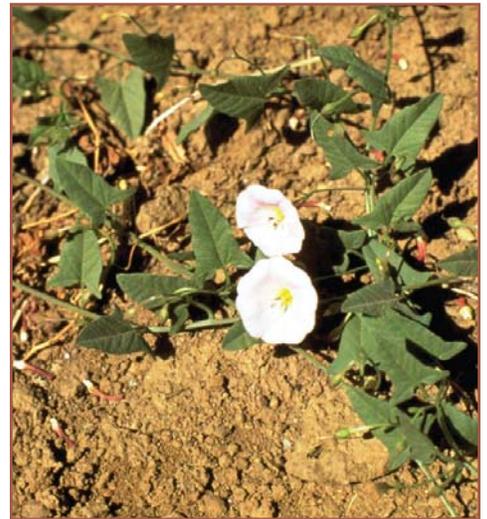
### Prevention:

Remove seedlings before they establish large root systems and produce seeds. Don't dispose of in backyard compost piles; bindweed can resprout from cuttings. City-provided yard waste bins are OK.

### Manual:

Avoid digging or tilling the soil around mature field bindweed roots; roots

**Non-Regulated Class C  
Noxious Weed: Control  
Recommended**



*Field bindweed is an aggressive, invasive perennial plant found throughout the West.*



*Flowers are trumpet-shaped and range from white to light pink.*



*Two small leaf bracts grow about one inch below the flower.*

## Questions?

King County Noxious Weed Control Program: **206-477-WEED** [kingcounty.gov/weeds](http://kingcounty.gov/weeds)

and rhizome fragments left behind may resprout. Repeated hand-pulling eventually works but is highly labor-intensive. It is best to limit hand-pulling and tilling to seedlings; do in early spring when the ground is wet. Smothering plants with mulch, black plastic, or geotextile fabric is another option, but the covering must be kept in place for several years. Success may be somewhat limited as field bindweed can persist without light, sending its underground roots beyond the covering's edge to start a new infestation. If using this method, be sure to cover the whole patch and monitor closely for regrowth along edges or through gaps in the covering.

**Mechanical/Covering:**

Mowing alone will not control this plant and is not recommended.

**Chemical:**

**Follow all applicable laws and regulations regarding herbicide use on your site, and follow all label instructions carefully.** Systemic herbicides can suppress bindweed, especially if combined with careful monitoring for surviving plants. Herbicides can be painted or brushed on leaves to avoid drift onto desirable plants. Products containing glyphosate are effective when applied in the summer and fall before the leaves die back. However, glyphosate is "non-selective" and will injure any foliage that it comes in contact with, including grass. Selective broadleaf herbicides with active ingredient triclopyr or 2,4-D work well for grassy areas, as they won't harm most grasses. Repeat treatment on regrowth as needed. All of the above herbicides are absorbed by foliage and moved throughout the plant to kill roots and shoots. For more information, contact the Noxious Weed Control Program.



*Leaves are smooth and roughly arrowhead-shaped.*



*Field bindweed grows along the ground until it finds plants, fences, or other structures to climb onto.*

**Also wanted:**

**Hedge bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), often called "morning glory," is another invasive weed that looks and acts much like field bindweed.**

However, hedge bindweed is much more common in urban natural areas and backyard gardens. Hedge bindweed appears very similar to field bindweed, but its flowers and foliage are larger. Also, the leaves are hairless and have a more pronounced arrow shape. Both invasive bindweeds should be controlled whenever possible. Hedge bindweed doesn't have as deep of a root system, so hand-pulling small sites is feasible, but still very labor-intensive. It can also be controlled with the herbicides mentioned above.



*Hedge bindweed leaves are larger, hairless, and more arrow-shaped.*



*Flowers of field bindweed (left) and hedge bindweed (right).*