

Shiny Geranium

Geranium lucidum

Geranium Family

Identification Tips

- Low-growing annual with tiny, pink, 5-petaled flowers that grow in pairs on short stems
- Leaves shiny, round to kidney-shaped with 5-7 lobes
- Sepals keeled
- Stems reddish, smooth (hairless), up to 20 inches tall
- Seeds form in capsules with a long, pointy “crane's bill”

Biology

Reproduces by seed. Seeds are forcefully ejected when ripe, helping it spread up as well as out from parent plants. This is probably why this plant can be found in crevices of tree trunks or spreading up hillsides. Usually grows as an annual but some plants live for two years. Flowering is from April to July and seeds mature and spread usually from late June to early July. Seeds germinate mostly in late summer to early fall, but can germinate several times a year.

Impacts

Can invade and overwhelm high quality native habitat in forests and grasslands. Spreads quickly by seed and forms dense carpets, excluding other vegetation. Contaminates nursery stock and can be accidentally introduced to landscaped areas and restoration sites.

Distribution

Introduced from Europe and Asia. In the Pacific Northwest, most abundant in Oregon in the Willamette Valley and the Portland area. Also increasingly found in many counties of western Washington. In King County, it is found in both urban and rural areas in yards, woodlands, roadsides and spreading from landscaped areas.

What You Can Do

Remove this weed from your property and wash boots, vehicles and animals that have been in infested areas. Inspect potted plants before and after planting to avoid introducing this species. The King County Noxious Weed Control Program is actively trying to control the spread of shiny geranium in King County. Please report any sightings.

Control Methods

Use one or a combination of the following methods depending on infestation size and location. Be adaptive and follow up for several growing seasons. The key to long-term control is preventing plants from going to seed and establishing competitive plantings.

Questions?

King County Noxious Weed Control Program: **206-477-WEED** kingcounty.gov/weeds

**Class B Noxious Weed:
Control Required in
Select Areas**



Photo by Ben Legler

Look for pairs of tiny pink flowers, winged sepals with “keels”, and shiny, rounded, lobed leaves.



Low-growing invasive annual that spreads as a contaminant in nursery stock and mulch materials.



Photo by Bruce Newhouse

Stems are often bright red but may also be green; stems are not hairy.

Manual and Mechanical:

Plants can be hand-pulled or dug out before they are in seed. Carefully remove as much root and stem as possible to prevent plants from resprouting. Do not mow, because it may result in spreading the plant more. Covering infested areas with cardboard topped by mulch can be effective if the covering is maintained for several growing seasons until plants stop coming up.

Chemical:

For dense patches, herbicide treatment may be more feasible. **Follow the herbicide label exactly as written and comply with all state and federal laws and any local rules relating to herbicide use.** Spray plants after they emerge but before flowering (March through April). Use either a broadleaf selective herbicide such as triclopyr if desirable grasses are present, or a non-selective herbicide such as glyphosate if grass damage is not a concern. After spraying, cover the area with mulch to suppress seeds in the soil from germinating. Chemical control options may differ for private, commercial and government agency users. For more information, contact the Noxious Weed Control Program.

Could be confused with:

Herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*) and Dovefoot Geranium (*Geranium molle*).



Herb Robert

Herb Robert has a similar growth form but its leaves are more lacy. Herb Robert is covered with glandular hairs, giving the plant a sticky feel and a strong, unpleasant odor (sometimes this plant is known as “stinky Bob”). It is also a noxious weed introduced from Europe. Since it is much more widespread than shiny geranium, control is not required in King County.



Dovefoot geranium

Dovefoot geranium has leaves similar to shiny geranium in shape but they are covered with soft hairs. Dovefoot flower petals are notched so it appears to have ten instead of five petals. Dovefoot is a common weed in turf and roadside areas.



Seeds form in capsules with a long pointed “crane’s bill.”



Can quickly form dense patches, overwhelming native habitat in forests and grasslands.



Do not mow—this will only spread shiny geranium more.



Should be discarded in the trash to prevent spread.