



## Michigan Invasive Plant Council

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### Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System (MPIAS June 2008)

#### *Hedera helix*, English Ivy

**Summary and Recommendations for Michigan:** *Hedera helix*, English Ivy has been used as a trailing evergreen ground cover and erosion controller since the time of settlement. *H. helix* is also a climber and is capable of ascending 50+ feet. Once established, *H. helix* can be expected to spread by trailing vegetative growth. It produces adventitious roots along the stem and may regenerate from stem fragments if they remain in contact with the soil. *Hedera helix* is dimorphic, which means that it has distinct juvenile (vegetative) and adult (flowering) phases. The transition to the adult phase is unpredictable, and in many 50+ year old stands, the transition to adult phase has not occurred. When maturation does occur, however, it is always associated with plants that have ascended at least 10 feet in height before the transformation to adult (flowering) phase. At such time, seed production may or may not occur, and seed viability in Michigan has not been observed, perhaps owing to Michigan's short growing season. Because of this, in Michigan, *Hedera helix* is not considered a threat in Midwestern landscapes even though from time to time, it has been misrepresented by information originating in the Pacific Northwest and along the Eastern seaboard.

It should also be noted that the common name English Ivy is used to represent a broad complex of *Hedera helix* forma and cultivars in the Pacific Northwest, several of which do not grow well in Midwestern climates due to Michigan's cold winters.

**Invasiveness in Michigan:** *Hedera helix*, English Ivy's potential invasiveness is considered insignificant due to both reproductive ability and dispersal. Its invasiveness rank is consistently insignificant across natural and managed systems in the Upper and Lower Peninsula ecological regions. For more information consult the complete MPIAS assessment.

**Value in Michigan:** Recognized value in horticulture, landscape and erosion control.

**Responsible Use:** *Hedera helix*, English Ivy is considered a useful ground cover and clinging vine species for use in Michigan landscapes. However, to use it responsibly, one should limit its planting to parts of the landscape that do not border adjacent properties. There are several cultivars that are available in the marketplace. *Hedera helix*, like all other landscape plants, should not be discarded in natural areas or areas adjoining natural areas. Rather, plant parts and trimmings should be thoroughly composted.

**Early detection/rapid response:** *Hedera helix* is easily identified by its evergreen foliage. Juvenile forms have 3 lobes, mature form does not have lobes and is ovate in shape. Consult printed or on-line resources for pictorial descriptors of the plant.

**Long term control/management:** *Hedera helix* can be removed from unwanted areas by mechanical or chemical means. Mechanical removal may take two seasons to eliminate plants due

to resprouting of stem fragments. Chemical applications should be performed in accordance with the manufacturer's label. Gardeners may simply remove plants as encountered.

**Restoration:** Removal of *Hedera helix* from any area may require restoration. In such case, a competent professional should be consulted for appropriate species and planting procedures

For complete information from the Michigan Plant Invasiveness Assessment System  
Consult: <http://invasiveplantsmi.org>