

# Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*)

Also known as Traveler's Joy.

Listed as a noxious weed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

**Threat:** Like English ivy, it is one of the largest invasive species threat to trees

- Blankets shrubs and trees, eventually causing them to collapse
- Grows along ground in layers that are several feet thick, preventing growth of native vegetation
- Spreads quickly along river margins, but will establish in any area not managed.

**Description:** Deciduous climbing vine

- Leaves fall off by early January
- Each leaf is made up of 5 leaflets (young plants may have only 3 leaflets)
- Bark is stringy and easily rubs off on older stems
- Blooms from July to September and the seeds ripen from September to January
- Fluffy seed-heads persist through winter.

**History:** Native of Eurasia. Introduced as an ornamental in Oregon between 1950 and 1970.

**Spread:** Can grow five to seven times faster than ivy, with each stem capable of producing 30 feet of growth in one season

- Each plant can produce over 100,000 seeds
- Seed dispersal is by wind, water, people and other animals
- Can also spread by fragmentation, when roots are produced from stem fragments, typically from older stems, which can hold more water.

**Control:** Best spotted during the winter time, when most other deciduous plants have lost their leaves

- All vines running along the ground and just under the surface must be dug out
- Roots broken off or cut off at least 2" below the surface usually do not survive
- Eradication requires multiple treatments
- Planting conifers will help limit germination by reducing available sunlight
- Good canopy cover limits distance of seed dispersal from 100 to 200 feet
- Dense, native ground cover may also significantly reduce seed germination.

**Alternatives:** Do not confuse clematis vitalba with the native variety of clematis

- The native species usually has only 3 leaflets per leaf and flowers in spring, whereas old man's beard has 5 leaflets and flowers in summer.



courtesy of Tom Forney, OR Dept of Agriculture

For more information:

Washington State Noxious Weed Board- [www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed\\_info/Written\\_findings/clematis\\_vitalba.html](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/weed_info/Written_findings/clematis_vitalba.html)



**4 COUNTY**  
Cooperative Weed  
Management Area

Prepared by Kathy Shearin, EMSWCD Program Coordinator, Sustainable Urban Landscapes, East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District, as a project for the Clackamas, Clark, Multnomah, and Washington Counties Cooperative Weed Management Area. Designed: Environmental Services, City of Portland. ES 0701