



Yachats Weed of the Month – December 2019

English holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

What, you may ask yourself, is this guy thinking? What can possibly be bad about the beautiful holly tree and what will Christmas be like without its bright red berries and shiny green leaves? Well, those lovely red berries get spread far and wide by our feathered friends, and soon there are lots of little holly trees coming up miles from the parent tree and in all the wrong places. Like the Cummins Ridge wilderness south of Yachats; like right in the middle of clumps of salal, where the holly will suffocate the native plant within a few years. Surveys have shown that numerous holly populations have become naturalized in amongst the native trees in the forests of the Pacific Northwest.

Impact: Holly is steadily replacing native trees, especially in forests close to urban areas where gardens can supply a regular source of seed. In some forests, holly is the fourth most abundant non-native, behind only blackberry, Scotch broom and ivy! Holly thrives in deep shade, choking out understory plants and forming razor wire-like thickets.

Identification: Holly, when small, can be confused with our own Oregon grape plants. But holly leaves tend to be thicker and deeper green in color. Since a picture is worth more than a few words, please refer to the photo below.

Management: Holly has deep roots, and once a plant gets established it is difficult to kill. If the stems are cut, they simply send out multiple new growths; herbicides also are ineffective due to the glossy leaves which are water repellent. And digging out holly trees disturbs the soil, providing an opportunity for new invasives to move in. It is best to pull holly seedlings when they are still tiny; later on the job becomes much more difficult. Another way you can help is to avoid buying holiday season wreaths that have holly in them.



Contact information: Call Wally at 541 606 0055 if you have any questions. For more weed info, go to www.yachatstrails.org .

Yachats "Weed of the Month" is an informational service of the Yachats Trails Committee and YIPS! - the Yachats Invasive Plants Subcommittee.