

# Tree Ivy Removal Program Final Report

## 2009-2013

July, 2013



English ivy impacting native species and habitat structures in Stanley Park. Photo by: Greg Ferguson

### Background

English ivy (*Hedera helix*) is a common non-native, invasive plant species found in British Columbia's Lower Mainland region. In Stanley Park, ivy is one of the most abundant invasive plant species and has been the focus of removal efforts by Stanley Park Ecology Society (SPES) since 2004.

Like other invasive species, ivy negatively impacts native species and habitat. When ivy climbs trees and other structures, its form of growth changes and it begins to produce fruits and seeds. Seeds may be eaten by certain bird and mammal species or simply fall to the ground. This facilitates both short and long distance dispersal, thus increasing impacts. To slow the further spread and impact of ivy in Stanley Park, it's important to reduce the production of seeds.

In April of 2009, SPES initiated a tree ivy removal program which involved volunteers in documenting and removing ivy growing up trees, shrubs and other structures in Stanley Park. The two main goals of the program were:

- To slow the spread of English ivy in Stanley Park and beyond, thus reducing its impact on forest ecosystems; and
- To protect and restore native species and natural structures that English ivy is impacting.



Flowering English ivy

“As a biologist, I appreciate what we are doing- removing invasive species and making this urban park a little more natural. The other volunteers are great and that’s why I keep coming back.” –Michael Arbeide, Tree Ivy Volunteer



SPES Tree Ivy Removal Program volunteers. Photo by: Robyn Worcester

## Program Results 2009-2013

June 27<sup>th</sup> 2013 marked the final session of the Tree ivy removal program, which regularly happened on Thursdays for three hour sessions. After four years, the group has now conducted a complete sweep of the Park removing English ivy from more than 8000 accessible trees and shrubs. The team will reassess the continuation of the project and monitor regrowth; but for now they will shift their focus on tackling other invasive species in the Park.

### Quick Facts:

- 80 volunteers engaged in the project
- Over 1900 volunteer hours committed to the project over 4 years
- 176 volunteer sessions
- 6495 trees and 1679 shrubs cleared of English ivy

### Trees and Shrubs Cleared of English ivy

A total of 8228 accessible trees, shrubs and structures were cleared of English ivy. Most of the vegetation cleared were trees, comprising 79% (6495), shrubs comprising 20% (1679), and other materials including sign posts and structures comprising 1% (54). Of the tree species cleared, 55% were coniferous species and 45% were deciduous species.





“Not many people have the opportunity to be outside working in the Park, but as part of Tree Ivy we have to do this and it’s a lot of fun.” -Phil Viaud, Tree Ivy Volunteer



News reporters filming volunteers as they remove ivy from some of the last accessible trees in Stanley Park to celebrate the completion of one full sweep of the Park. Photo: Ivy Smith

### Conclusion

Although volunteers conducted an entire sweep of the trees in the Park, due to volunteer safety or accessibility issues there are still about 25 trees in the Park that have not been cleared of ivy. SPES staff will work towards enhancing the benefits of this project by mitigating regrowth as they work with volunteers to remove English ivy from the ground in priority areas where the trees have now been released of the ivy. Plans will be put in place to monitor the growth of ivy on the trees within the next year.

### Acknowledgements

SPES would like to thank the many volunteers who have committed to this project over the years; especially Phil Viaud and Tom McIlfaterick for their leadership over the course of this project. Your passion for conservation is inspiring and will make a lasting impression on Stanley Park.

### Literature Cited

Fenger, M, T. Manning. J. Cooper, S. Guy, and P. Bradford. 2006. Wildlife and trees in British Columbia. B.C. Ministry of Forests and Range and Lone Pine Publishing. Canada.

# What can you do ?



SPES Tree Ivy Removal Program volunteers. Photo: Ivy Smith

## What You Can Do To Help Stop the Spread of Invasive Plants

- Investigate the potential invasiveness of plant species before you buy or plant them.
- Remove invasive species from your garden and choose to grow native plants instead.
- Avoid letting invasive plants go to fruit or seed.
- Avoid composting invasive plant materials or seeds as they can spread.
- Educate others about invasive species and the problems they pose on our local ecology.

For more information on the tree ivy removal program and how you can help conserve Stanley Park's ecology please contact: [stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca](mailto:stewardship@stanleyparkecology.ca) or 604-718-6547.