

Yellow archangel

Fall... the leaves are turning, the rains returning, and the European wildflower yellow archangel (*Lamium galeobdolon*) is starting to become more apparent again. As with so many invaders, archangel found its way to the U.S. as an ornamental and has since escaped and begun to spread throughout the Tualatin Basin. It is easy to identify and report as summer yields way to cooler, wetter weather.



Yellow archangel covering a forest floor (William Metcalfe, Geograph Project)

You will notice yellow archangel filling in places where human activity, such as home building or road building, has changed the natural landscape. It is a major problem for native plants and attractive wildlife because it forms dense patches that overwhelm native wildflowers. These invasions can prevent the regrowth of other native shrubs or trees that wildlife depend on for food and shelter too. It is likely that these changes to the natural collection of plants in your area could bring with them changes in the animals that frequent your yard as well, reducing the appearance of native birds and pollinators that seek out specific native plants.

It is most likely found in forested and stream-side areas in cities where gardeners have unknowingly planted it for its beauty and hardiness. According to Rob Emanuel of Clean Water Services, “Many gardeners have loved this plant since it was introduced in the 1990s – it is a popular addition to flowering baskets, boxes and even as a groundcover.” Unfortunately, he notes, archangel loves our natural areas a bit too much and will quickly invade stream areas where it crowds out native wildflowers and wildlife. Rob asks that gardeners please not plant it intentionally and remove it where it possible (see below for tips). Keep in mind when looking for something new for the yard that this invader can appear under the following common names too: Herman’s pride, dummy nettle, golden dead-nettle, weazel snout, and silverfrost. Sometimes, it even escapes from a non-gardener’s home as old floral gift baskets are carelessly tossed into the yard or compost

heap. Because archangel can spread by any means necessary (small broken pieces of stem carried by water or animals, small fragments of the roots left behind when trying to dig it up, or its prolific seeds), this invader runs amok along stream corridors especially.



Yellow archangel leaves and blossoms (Gillian Moy, Geograph Project)

Identifying Yellow Archangel

- Look for it as a trailing vine or upright plant depending on the conditions of your yard.
- Its leaves are typically multi-colored, with silvery-grey markings against a green background, and they are oval-shaped and toothed. You'll know you have the right plant if the leaves are hairy.
- The stems are square, with the leaves arranged opposite one another along the stem (instead of in an alternating pattern).
- There may be flowers on the plant this time of year as well. Look for flowers that are small, yellow and tubular. They grow on special 'flowering stems' that will shoot up 1-2 feet to improve the plant's chances of reproducing – look for clusters of the flowers close to the stem and usually in pairs.
- You can confirm your sighting by grabbing a sample and sniffing for a strong, unpleasant odor. (Just be sure to seal any sample in a bag and throw in the municipal waste to prevent spreading.)

What to Do

If you spot this escaped ornamental, report it to the [Oregon Invasive Species Hotline](http://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/) at <http://oregoninvasiveshotline.org/>. (If reporting online is challenging, please call or email our Outreach Coordinator, Jen Nelson, at tualatinswcd@gmail.com or 503-648-3174 x121.)

If you are a Weed Watcher, by now you know getting rid of invasives is never easy. Before reaching for the herbicide, though, you have a few choices for dealing with archangel in more holistic ways. Its vines can be hand pulled so long as you are careful to remove remaining pieces of the roots and stems.

Obviously, it is almost impossible to get them all, so be prepared to monitor the area you have cleared and pull any shoots that come back up. Remember that this also means that the yard waste generated from removing archangel is not suitable for compost, whether at home or by the city. You should seal anything you pull up tightly in a plastic bag and dispose of immediately in the municipal trash, headed for the landfill.

We know some people may already be attached to this plant – after all, its beauty is what carried it across an ocean and a continent to reach us! If you'd like to continue enjoying what you already have, the best practice would be to try to contain its spread. That means removing it from areas where it can easily be transported by water or wildlife. If you have this plant near a stream or a natural area like a park, you will probably want to remove it entirely from that area. Elsewhere, transplanting archangel to a container or pot will help, so long as you keep the plant contained to that pot and properly dispose of the pieces you trim off.

While pruning archangel in a pot is necessary to prevent its spread and indeed will help the plant grow more vigorously, it is not a good idea to simply cut this plant – our neighbors to the north at the King County Noxious Weed Control Board have discovered that when this plant is cut, it regrows more densely, and fast. If it comes down to it, you can look for advice on selecting an herbicide and safely applying it by consulting the PNW Weed Management Handbook, or calling us at the Tualatin Soil and Water Conservation District for further advice.

Interested in becoming a Weed Watcher? Learn more on our website at <https://swcd.net/programs/weed-watchers/>, join our quarterly e-newsletter to learn when 2014 classes will be held (email tualatinswcd@gmail.com), and follow us on social media for frequent updates.

Find us on Facebook for daily status updates

www.facebook.com/tualatinswcd

Tweet us a question or tip

@tswcd

View District photos on Tumblr

<http://www.tumblr.com/blog/tualatinswcd>

Share online resources and news with

Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/tualatins/boards/>

Resources

Clean Water

Services <http://www.cleanwaterservices.org/Residents/JoinTheCycle/InYourYard/Invasives/YellowArchangel.aspx>

Washington State Noxious Weed Control Board

<http://www.nwcb.wa.gov/detail.asp?weed=81>

King County, Washington

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/environment/animalsAndPlants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/yellow-archangel.aspx>

Dave's Garden: The Invaders

<http://davesgarden.com/guides/articles/view/920/>

PNW Weed Management Handbook

<http://pnwhandbooks.org/weed/other-items/control-problem-weeds>