

Rubus fruticosus* spp. *aggregate

Common names: Blackberry, European Blackberry, Bramble

Family: Rosaceae

Not-so-fun Facts:

- ★ There are at least 9 distinct species of highly invasive Blackberry that have naturalised within Victoria
- ★ They are a declared weed of national significance
- ★ They are fast growing and form dense stands which impede the growth of native vegetation along gullies, hillsides in regional & urban areas
- ★ Avoid the temptation to eat berries growing on public land. They may have been sprayed with chemical herbicides



Image source: North Central Catchment Management Authority (2012)

Identifiable characteristics:

- ★ Long lived, sprawling fast growing shrub with prickly arching primocanes
- ★ Deciduous and semi-deciduous varieties
- ★ Grow up to 3 meters high and wide
- ★ Leaves are up to 9cm long, dark green with 3 to 5 leaflets
- ★ Underside of leaf has fine prickles
- ★ Flowers are odourless, with five white or pink petals
- ★ Flowering in late spring through to summer
- ★ Berry fruits are black in colour and are produced in summer to autumn

Life cycle:

- ★ Can reproduce from seed, cuttings, or any part of the root system or plant that touches the ground
- ★ Seeds are dispersed by birds, animals and water
- ★ Established specimens can also reproduce asexually from cane tips

Chemical control methods:

- ★ Chemical methods used on actively growing plants are the most reliable form of control
- ★ Different species react differently to herbicides and many applications may be required
- ★ Machinery, controlled burning or goats (yes - that's correct!) can be used to remove or reduce the size of established specimens, to be followed up with chemical treatment

Non chemical control methods:

- ★ Hand removal of smaller specimens is achievable and effective
- ★ Larger specimens are more difficult to remove by hand
- ★ Fruiting branches should be bagged and destroyed

Fun Fact:

- ★ There's a native look-alike! *Rubus parvifolius* - Native Raspberry
- ★ The leaves are smaller, they have pink flowers and red berries
- ★ This species is not invasive
- ★ Be mindful not to accidentally remove these when controlling the invasive blackberries



Native Raspberry *Rubus parvifolius*

Image source: Yarra Ranges Council (2023). Photos by M. Bull.

References & super helpful resources:

Agriculture Victoria

<https://agriculture.vic.gov.au/biosecurity/weeds/weeds-information/blackberry>

Marshall, T. (2010). *Weed: the ultimate gardener's guide to organic weed control*. HarperCollinsPublishersAustralia Pty Ltd.

Nillumbik Shire Council

<https://www.nillumbik.vic.gov.au/Explore/Environment/Natural-environment/Plants-and-trees/Weeds/Blackberry>

North Central Catchment Management Authority (2012). *Weeds identification guide*.

https://www.nccma.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/weeds_identification_guide.pdf

Yarra Ranges Council (2023). *Plant directory*.

<https://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/PlantDirectory/Climbers-Creepers/Rubus-parvifolius>

