

# Shiny Geranium

## Invasive Species Alert Sheet



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## Regional Invasive Species Program

**The spread of non-native invasive plants has serious ecological, economic and health impacts.** Local governments and other partners are asking for help from all residents to report and address shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum*) outbreaks on private property and public lands. This plant is a high priority to eradicate before further spread occurs.

### **Please report all plants!**

Shiny geranium is native to Eurasia and Northern Africa. In British Columbia, shiny geranium is found in the Capital Region, and in a few sites in the Lower Mainland. Within the capital region, there are patches in Langford, North Saanich, Otter Point, Saanich, Victoria and on Salt Spring Island.

### Why is shiny geranium a problem?

- **Displaces native vegetation** through aggressive and rapid spread, decreasing foraging capability for wildlife and decreasing local plant biodiversity, also increases erosion
- **Threatens species at risk** by dominating habitats and altering vegetation
- **Dominates understorey** in home gardens, parks, and other habitats
- **Can contaminate plant nursery stock** and be accidentally introduced

### What does it look like?

- **Flowers:** small, pink with five petals, round at tip, in pairs on short stems, intermixed with leaves, hairless and keeled sepals
- **Stems:** grow up to 50cm tall from weak, central root, smooth, turns red as it matures
- **Leaves:** shiny/waxy appearance, round to kidney shaped, 5-7 coarsely toothed lobes
- **Seeds:** 2mm long, smooth, oval, reddish colour with black projection
- **Roots:** branched, tender and shallow, whitish in colour



### Could be confused with:

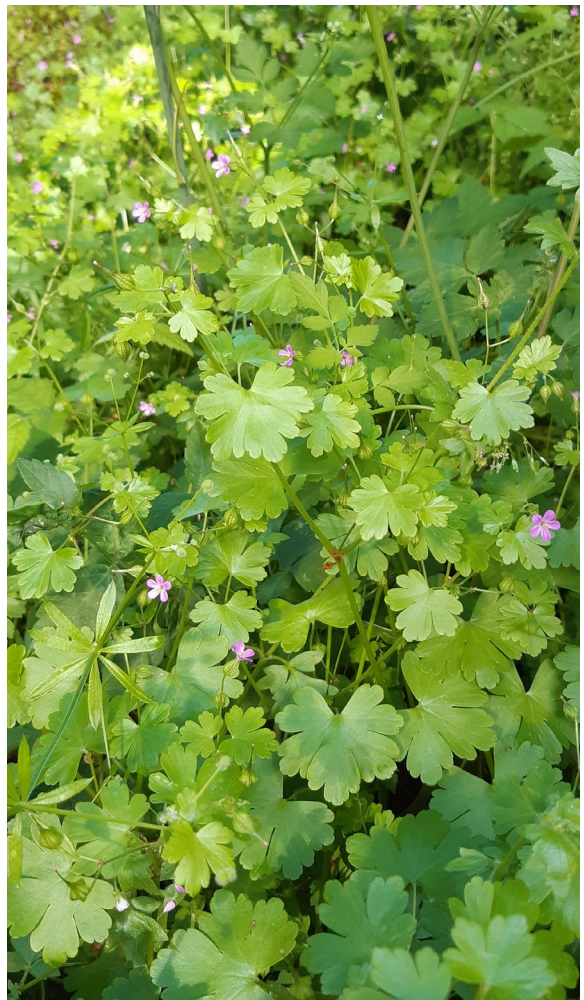
- ***G. molle* (dovesfoot):** stem is pink, reddens with age, stiff and fuzzy (not smooth), petals have a shallow notch at the tips, soft and hairy flower, leaves fuzzy and dull (not shiny)
- ***G. robertianum* (herb robert):** stems hairy, triangular leaf outline, leaves fern-like divided into 3-5 segments, strong leaf odour
- ***G. dissectum* (crane's bill):** stem is stiff, hairy and not red, leaves divided like a palm into 5-7 segments, leaves deeply cut near the base into linear segments, petals shallowly notched at the tips (not rounded), sepals equal to petals, bristle-tipped

## Habitat and biology:

- Usually grows as an annual, but can live for up to two years. A member of the geranium (Geraniaceae) family.
- Can tolerate diverse conditions, but prefers semi-open habitats with moderate sun
- Blooms March to July depending on growing conditions. Most seeds germinate in the fall, but can germinate in the spring whenever moisture and temperature is favourable.
- Seeds viable up to 5 years and are ejected up to 6+ metres without wind, easily trapped in boots, paws, tires etc.
- Local dispersal by wind, wildlife, humans and water. Vehicles, equipment, contaminated seed, plants and fill material are primary sources for unintentional spread.

## What to do if you spot a shiny geranium plant:

- **Prevent:** don't buy, grow or trade this plant
- **Report:** report all outbreaks to the contacts below for support and monitoring. Search for isolated plants and small patches – every plant is important to report and remove!
- **Remove:** if you have an outbreak on your property, follow the instructions below for careful removal and follow up. Work to prevent seeding and limit further spread.
- **Prevent spread:** clean shoes, tools, clothing, vehicles, pets and equipment before leaving an infested site. Use clean landscaping supplies– buy local!
- **Monitor:** monitor for outbreaks, especially during bloom time May to July



## For small infestations:

- **Manually remove** before seed dispersal from May to August. Pull gently to minimize soil disturbance and include the bulbous crown at the base of the stems so plants can't re-sprout. They are very easy to pull. If the site is suitable, mulch the area in the fall.
- **To prevent spread**, first remove plants growing in full sun or shallow soil, and from high-traffic areas. Begin at the outer edges of a patch and work back to the centre.
- **Seeds that are turning brown** and plants that are turning yellow or red will disperse seed earliest – deal with these first
- **Mulching:** To smother young plants and suppress the seed bank, spread a 3 – 4 inch layer of mulch around desired plants in garden areas. If the terrain permits, a layer of cardboard can be laid down before topping with organic mulch. Add a thin layer of mulch on top each subsequent year. Mulch can be used on dense patches in lawns, but needs to be in place for several years.



- **Disturbance with hoeing:** In deeper soil, especially in gardens, repeated scuffling during the germination period uproots young plants and minimizes later efforts to pull plants that re-root. Ensure this is done before flowers to go to seed.
- **Repeated mowing:** a short term solution only if done early in the season before seeds form, while preparing for other more lasting management methods
- **Monitor** for several years as the seedbank can survive and persist even after removal
- **Replant:** choose non-invasive or native species to replant

### Large infestations:

- Larger patches can be controlled by covering with sheet mulch using cardboard and then mulch or woodchips to suppress growth
- Herbicides may be helpful depending on local and provincial regulations

### Proper Disposal:

- Do not compost! Flowers can still form viable seeds after removal, and root fragments may persist.
- Put all plant material in strong/thick garbage bags and dispose. The best option is to take the bags labelled "invasive species" to the Hartland Landfill.



#### CONTACT INFORMATION

P: 250.360.3302  
E: [invasive@crd.bc.ca](mailto:invasive@crd.bc.ca)  
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