Tips for Removing English Ivy

The Hillsborough Tree Board advocates for removal of English ivy from properties because the ivy:

- Smothers native ground covers, creating what some call “ivy deserts.”
- Strangles trees and prevents a tree’s leaves from reaching sunlight.
- Adds weight to trees and retains moisture, accelerating rot and attracting mosquitoes.

Below are some tips from the Tree Board on how to remove this invasive non-native plant.

Tools for removal

Removal of English ivy may require some or all of these tools:

- Hand pruners
- Loppers
- Pruning saw
- Flat-head screwdriver
- Shovel or mattock

Removal from trees

To remove English ivy from trees:

- Cut vines no higher than 2 inches above the ground. Then reach as high as you can comfortably reach to cut the same vine.
- If the vine is not firmly attached to the trunk, pry the vine loose with a screwdriver and pull the vine off the tree.
- If the vine is firmly attached, leave it in place to avoid damaging the bark. The vine will die above the cut.
- Remove cut vines from the ground because they can root if left behind.

Tree protection

To protect trees from English ivy encroachment:

- Dig up ivy roots around the base of the tree, at least 2 feet from the tree.
- If the ivy is too well established to dig up, herbicide may be brushed on a cut vine. Spraying herbicide is not recommended.
- Monitor the area to keep the ivy away from the tree.

More information

See a video created by the Tree Board. For additional information, contact the Tree Board.