



Control Options for Italian Arum

General Information

Italian arum, also known as Lords-and-Ladies, is a native plant to Europe and has been introduced to North America as a garden ornamental. It invades open woodlands and forest margins. Reproduction is by seed and by bulblets. Bulblets are produced by the roots and break off in the soil to produce new plants. All parts of the plant are poisonous. If eaten, it causes burning, swelling and severe pain of the lips, mouth, tongue and throat. Contact with the sap can cause minor skin irritation. Italian arum is a tuberous perennial that grows up to 1½ feet high. The arrow-shaped, glossy leaves, which grow up to a foot long, have long stalks, and are grayish green with pale green midribs. The tiny white flowers are borne together in a finger-like structure, partly surrounded by a large, sheath-like bract. After flowering, the leaves and bract wither away, leaving a stalk of bright orange red berries. New leaves emerge in the autumn and will stay evergreen throughout the winter in warmer climates. In colder areas the leaves die back and reemerge in the spring.



Manual/Mechanical Techniques

Although digging may be effective for small infestations, it could also spread the bulblets and infestation, if great care is not taken. If the tuber/bulb is not removed from the soil while digging, the plants will resprout. Do not move soil from infested sites to new areas or to backyard compost piles. All root, bulb, fruit or tuber parts should be sealed in plastic and disposed as garbage. Wear gloves and protective clothing to protect skin from possible irritation. Follow-up work will be required to control any plants that develop from missed plant parts.

Chemical Recommendations

When using herbicides, always read and follow label directions for rates, spraying conditions, personal protective equipment and grazing intervals. Do not spray when it is windy or raining, or when rain is forecast. Herbicides should not be sprayed within 60 feet of water bodies and creeks, without further consultation with the Noxious Weed Board. Remember, it is the herbicide applicators responsibility to apply the product in accordance to the instructions on the label. Since the plant of concern is often growing with other desirable plants and grass, care should be taken not to injure off-target plants.

Published information on control of this plant is limited. Herbicides which contain the active ingredient glyphosate and imazapyr are effective in killing the top growth of Italian arum, but may not affect the tuber. A one-year greenhouse trial conducted by Dr. Tim Miller of Washington State University showed some success with some herbicides on top growth, but may not have similar effects on the tubers. Glyphosate (many brand names) at 3% with sulfometuron (Oust®, others) at 1.5 oz/acre resulted in no regrowth. Metsulfuron (Escort®, others) at 1.5 oz/acre resulted in 99% reduced growth. Imazapyr (Polaris®, Habitat®, others) at an application rate of 1% reduced growth by 98%, and 2,4-D/Dicamba (Weedmaster®, others) reduced growth by 86%.

NEVER apply RoundUp® or other herbicides to standing water unless they are distinctly labeled for aquatic use. Ingredients in non-aquatic products may be toxic to fish and other aquatic organisms. Aquatic formulations of herbicides are generally only available to licensed pesticide applicators in Washington State. If the target plants are immediately adjacent to or are in standing water, a state permit may be required in order to treat those plants with an aquatically approved herbicide.

- **Always read and understand the label of the herbicides you choose to use.**
- **More is NOT better when using herbicides, and may actually hinder the ability of the herbicide to injure the target plant if the solution is too strong. This wastes money and effort and puts more product into the environment than is necessary. ALWAYS follow the recommended rates on the label.**
- **With all herbicides, when you apply them is as important as how you apply them.**

The mention of a specific product brand name in this document is not, and should not be construed as an endorsement or as a recommendation for the use of that product. Herbicide information is taken from the Washington State Noxious Weed Board website.