Shiny Geranium

Western Invasive Plant Fact Sheet #2

Geranium lucidum

Figure 1

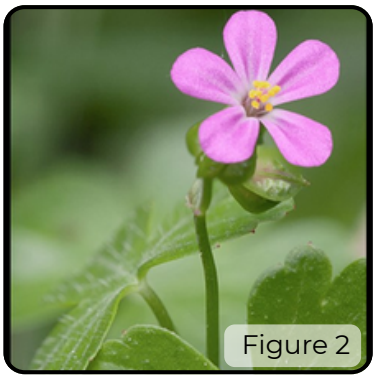

Figure 2

Figure 3

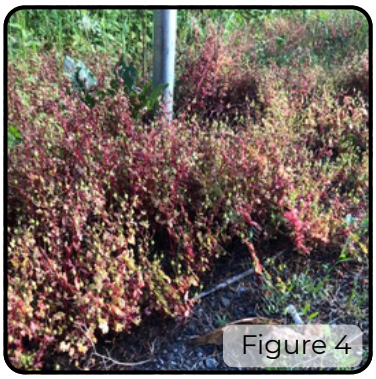

Figure 4

Scan or Click for more management information

Quick Facts: Shiny geranium (*Geranium lucidum),* also known as shining cranesbill, is an annual, herbaceous weed that spreads quickly in environments ranging from shaded woodlands to full sun. It is most commonly found in disturbed areas and working forests. This plant is native to Europe, western Asia, and northern Africa. As a pioneer species within its home range, shiny geranium thrives in disturbed areas and can rapidly spread. It colonizes habitat plantings, forestlands, and pastures. Once it is established in an area, erosion is also a major concern. Shiny geranium dies back in the fall and leaves bare ground exposed throughout the rainy season.
This plant commonly contaminates nursery stock, which makes it a common weed in habitat plantings. Shiny geranium is self-pollinating.

Invasion Strategy: This plant spreads primarily through seeds. Shiny geranium seeds mature and "pop" out of the seed pod, spreading them over 20 feet away from the mother plant. Seeds can also attach and be spread on the fur of wildlife, boots and socks, tilling equipment, and tires. Dense mats of shiny geranium shade out the ground and prevent other plants from growing. The root system of this plant is shallow and breaks easily, allowing the plant to resprout if any roots are left in the soil after pulling.

Identifying Features: Shiny geranium is an herbaceous weed which matures from cool green to bright red and purple throughout the summer. Seeds germinate in the soil from early spring to fall, producing small seedlings.

- Leaves are shiny, round to kidney-shaped with five to seven lobes
- Small, pink, five-petaled flowers with a white center
- Sepals (structures under the flower) have prominent ribs from top to bottom, resembling the keel of a ship
- Hairless stems
- Can grow to a maximum height of 20 inches
- Brown, pointed, textured seeds that can stick to hair and clothing

Shiny Geranium *Geranium lucidum*

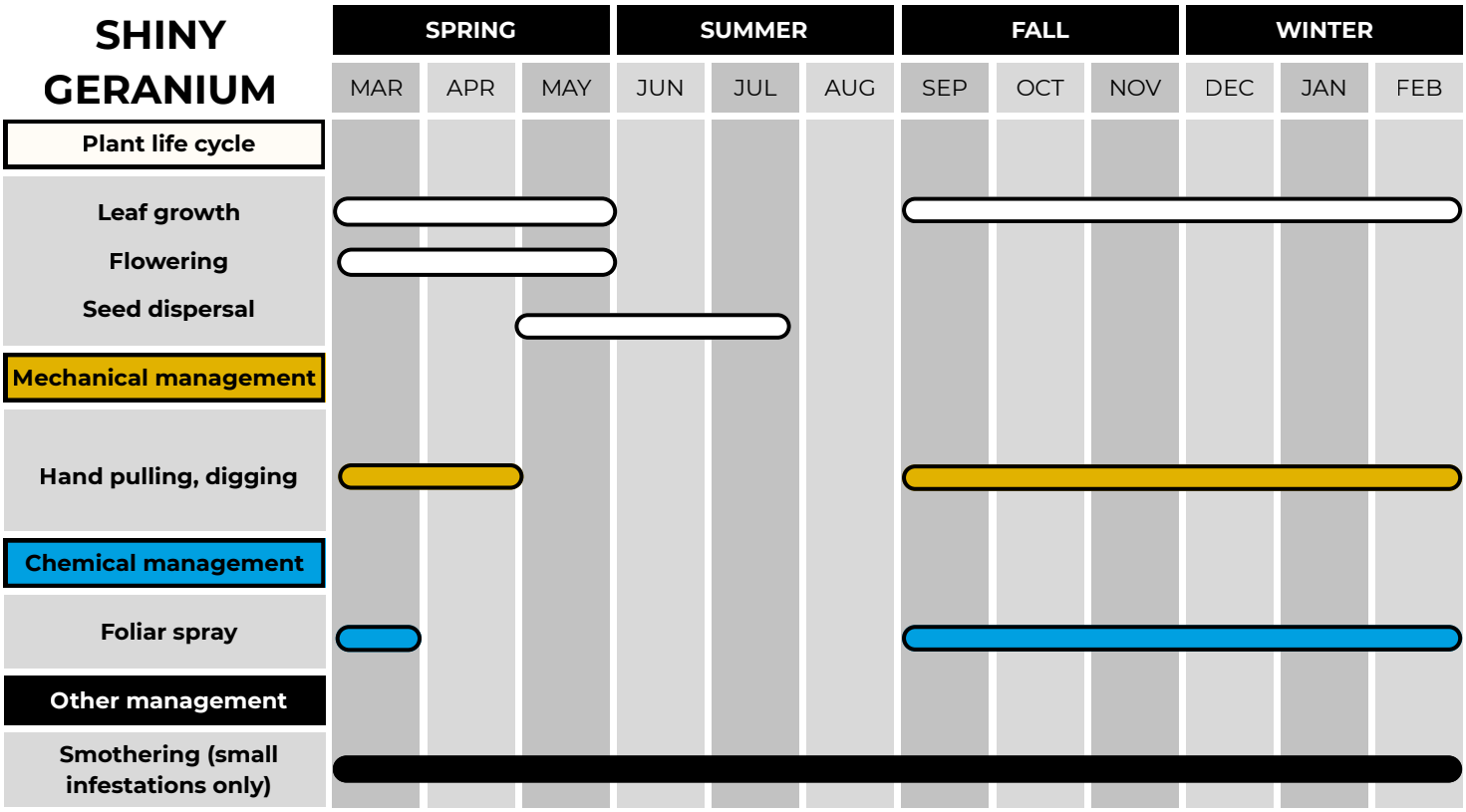

Table 1. This chart is based on USDA plant hardiness zone 7. Plant growth and treatment times vary by region.

Management Methods:

Mechanical - Repeated hand pulling can be effective in small areas. Smothering using cardboard covered in a dense layer of mulch can reduce the infestation. Mow only before seed set. Start control in areas with the smallest infestations first and make a long-term plan to monitor for regrowth.

Chemical - Foliar application of herbicide when the plant first emerges is ideal. Avoid foliar application when the plant is in bloom to reduce impact on pollinators.

Cultural - Shading out this plant is not effective. However, establishing vegetation in cleared areas is critical to keeping shiny geranium from establishing.

Disclaimer - Selecting the best management method for this plant can be site- and context-specific. Check with your local USDA Service Center or University Extension agent to explore your options and determine what is most appropriate for your location and situation.

Management Information:

Dispose of cut plant materials where they cannot resprout. If seeds are present, bag them and dispose of them in a landfill. Equipment should be cleaned after management.

Sap can cause skin irritation. Personal protective equipment is recommended when removing any invasive species, and especially when using herbicides. Always follow label instructions when using herbicide!

Species present Absent

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Shiny Geranium *Geranium lucidum*

Look-alike Species: Two other invasive geranium species are commonly confused with shiny geranium: Herb Robert and dove's foot geranium.

Herb Robert *(Geranium robertanum)* is also an invasive weed with similar management recommendations (Figure 5). Herb Robert has leaves with a "feathery" appearance and deeper lobes (Figure 6). The stems are red and fuzzy.

Figure 5

Figure 6

Dove's foot geranium *(Geranium molle)* is also an introduced species with lobed leaves and pink flowers (Figure 7). However, dove's foot geranium has fuzzy leaves and stems and the structures under the flowers (sepals) lack ridges.

Figure 7

References and Additional Reading:

- King County Noxious Weed Control Board. Shiny geranium identification and control. [Phenology and management information].
- Oregon State University - Solve pest problems. How to manage shiny geranium: take action to control this invasive weed. [Identification and management].
- Pacific Northwest Pest Management Handbook. Geranium, shiny (Geranium lucidum) and herb Robert (Geranium robertianum) [chemical management]

Photo Credits:

- Figure 1: Washington State University Northwestern Washington Research and Extension Center, Timothy W Miller
- Figure 2: California Invasive Plant Council, Photo: Amadej Trnkoczy
- Figure 3: Nicholas Turland, shining cranesbill
- Figure 4: Oregon State University Extension, Solve Pest Problems: Shiny Geranium
- Range map: USDA PLANTS Database
- Figure 5: julia_walker, iNaturalist
- Figure 6: oliviajerome, iNaturalist
- Figure 7: Svdmolen, Wikimedia Commons

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