

American Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana*)

Poisonous

Threat: Poisonous and invasive • Has disrupted the migration patterns of certain bird species in Britain by producing large amounts of fruit at a time of year when few native plants do

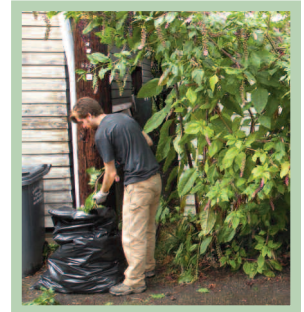
- Considered aggressive and invasive, but is new to the NW
- With vigilance, we can stop or slow this weed before it becomes established and causes damage.

Description: A large, smooth-leaved, branching herb from a large, perennial rootstock, with green, red, or purple stems • Leaves alternate and simple; flowers white, on a long stem, more or less erect; fruit a dark purple berry composed of 5-12 segments fused in a ring, the stem drooping • *P. rigida* differs by having shorter, erect fruiting stems.



History: This plant is native to southeastern US and has the potential to become very difficult to eradicate in the Pacific Northwest's moist, moderate climate

- This plant was likely brought to this region for landscaping interest
- Many parts of this plant are highly toxic and may cause death if eaten.



Spread: Birds and humans spread berries • Commonly found in disturbed areas.

Control: Pokeweed is a perennial plant, which means the stems, leaves, and flowers die each year, but the roots (and therefore the plant) live through the winter • In Spring, each plant will send up new stems and leaves • The large tuberous root system must be dug out and disposed of. This plant has sometimes been mistaken for Japanese knotweed, another invasive species in northwestern Oregon, due to its hollow red stems and large ovate to lanceolate leaves.



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Alternatives: Native blue or red elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea* or *Sambucus racemosa*) are fast growing, deciduous shrubs with creamy flower heads and berries that are edible to wildlife. Sunflowers are also tall and fast growing, with a showy summer bloom that provides food for wildlife. Sunflowers are annuals that may self-sow.

For more information:

www.emswcd.org/weeds/weeds-toknow/131-pokeweed-phytolacca-americana-

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/002874.htm

www.oardc.ohio-state.edu/weedguide/singlerecord.asp?id=270



**4 COUNTY
Cooperative Weed
Management Area**

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