



# Ada County



January  
2012

## Pest of the Month

**A quick guide to identifying and controlling  
invasive plants and animals found in the county**

### WHITE BRYONY

**White Bryony (*Bryonia alba*)** is a vigorous vine with major destructive potential to native vegetation, forest communities, vineyards, and farmland. It forms dense mats which shade out the vegetation it grows upon.

A herbaceous, perennial vine of the cucumber family, white bryony has separate male and female flowers found on the same plant. Greenish-white flowers are 1 cm across. Long curling tendrils, flowers, and fruit all stem from axils in the center of lobed leaves.



#### Quick Facts

This invasive weed grows aggressively; it can produce three vines at a time, which each grow up to 15 cm per day. Once it establishes itself, it will climb plants and trees as well as fences and buildings. Effectively blocking the sun and even rain from its host, the dense shade of the bryony eventually destroys what it covers. If not the lack of sun, then winter snow or heavy rains weighing down the mat of bryony create too much extra weight leading to breakage of host limbs or even felling of entire host trees.

White bryony is native to Europe and Northern Iran. It was first reported in the United States in 1975. It probably arrived as a medicinal plant used to induce vomiting, the plant and berries are known to be poisonous to people. Forty berries can constitute a lethal dose for adult humans.

Currently identified in only four states (Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming) this invasive species is declared a Class B Noxious weed. This classification indicates that bryony is already abundant in many areas. Containment is the goal in those areas, but it is to be prevented/eradicated in new regions.



Birds are the greatest dispersal mechanism of White bryony by disseminating seeds. Birds eating the berries deposit seeds beneath other shrubs and fences which provide optimal structures for new Bryony plants to climb.

*See control methods on other side...*

## How to Control

Control of bryony through tillage is problematic because bryony grows close to the base of the supporting plant and tilling would harm the host plant's roots.

Simply cutting off bryony vines is ineffective because the bryony plant grows back from the root.

### Chemical

Broadleaf herbicides such as Roundup can be useful, but care must be taken to pull Bryony away from host plant, and multiple applications are necessary to eventually move herbicide to the root and block production of new shoots.

### Manual

The most effective method of eradicating bryony requires vigilance. By scouting for new white bryony plants every year, and cutting/removing new growth immediately and repeatedly throughout the growing season, one can return in the autumn to locate and sever roots of new plants. In order to kill a plant, the roots must be severed 7 to 10 cm below ground surface to remove the crown and prevent re-sprouting.

### Biological Control

There is currently no known biological control for bryony, although it may be used as a food plant by the larvae of Cabbage Moth.



**Note:** Chemical control of any weed can be difficult and confusing. If you are not experienced in chemical control or do not understand the product label, you should consult a licensed applicator to assist you. Inappropriate application can kill desirable vegetation, and may violate federal law.



For questions and concerns, please contact:

**Ada County Weed, Pest, and Mosquito Abatement**

**975 E. Pine . Meridian, Idaho . 208-577-4646 . [weedandpest@adaweb.net](mailto:weedandpest@adaweb.net)**