

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant, but may have limited distribution in some counties

Shiny geranium
Geranium lucidum

Other common names: Shining geranium, shiny-leaf geranium, shining crane's bill

USDA symbol: GELU
ODA rating: B



Introduction: Native to Eurasia, the species has found its niche in Western Oregon and Washington taking the region by storm in as little as 15 years. Used for centuries in Europe for herbal treatments primarily as a diuretic and astringent, it is now considered only a nuisance plant in North America. Tolerant of shade and wet soils, it grows prolifically in oak and ash woodlands in the Willamette Valley.

Distribution in Oregon: Shiny geranium is well established in northwestern Oregon.

Description: Shiny geranium grows predominantly as an annual weed though it may become biennial depending on moisture conditions. Stems are red colored growing from a weak central root. Leaves are rounded, deeply lobed with a waxy appearance that makes dense infestations easy to recognize. Flowers are pink, 5 petaled and grow interspersed with the leaves. It sprouts in early fall with the first heavy rainstorms of the season and by early spring, plants become very pronounced. During April and May, dense low-lying patches form and flowering commences. By late June and July, seed formation is completed and the plant material melts back into the forest floor. The seeds are small and rapidly transported to uninfested areas on boots, vehicles, and by wildlife. Shiny geranium grows in the Pacific Northwest predominantly as an understory species intermixed with grasses, forbs, and moss. Oak woodlands and forest openings are ideal locations for this plant to establish and dominate. Conifer forests offer suitable habitat though dense second growth plantations often create excessive shade, limiting growth and density.

Impacts: Shiny geranium in Western Oregon and the Pacific Northwest effect native plant communities in oak woodlands, seasonally wet ash forests and conifer forest edges. Utilizing the abundance of early spring moisture, shiny geranium quickly establishes, dominating sites by smothering other early spring wildflowers and the seedlings of perennial plants. As soils dry, few other plants are able to establish through the receding weed canopy.

Biological controls: There are no approved biological control agents available.

