

coloured, hairy bark which can be rubbed off. They may lie along the ground, where they take root and create further plants that send their numerous quickly growing, ridged stalks climbing into the light. Bush clematis will have only one or two climbing stems with firm brown bark that does not shed fibres when rubbed.

Recognition of young plants

If seedlings of old man's beard can be spotted and pulled out, control of them is quick and easy. Watch for seedlings along tracks and paths, along fence lines, and in gardens. They are shade tolerant and can be found under standing bush.

Young plants have leaves that are bluntly serrated and covered with very fine hairs. The leaves come off the greenish, mauve stem in pairs and have five leaflets (actually an opposite pair, then a terminal three). The seedling plants illustrated were growing in an ornamental garden outside a city shop.

When seedlings are found look for the mature plant that was the source of seed. This may be nearby, but seed distributed by wind may have come from a long distance. Members who live in or are travelling through parts of the country where old man's beard is not known have a special responsibility and opportunity to watch for seedling colonisers and to remove them.

Control methods

Pull young plants by hand. This is easy, as they are not deep rooted. Roll up and carry the plant off the site or hang it in the fork of a tree to wither and die. Return to the site from time to time to look for

further plants which may come up later.

Where ground has been cleared by the removal of a mature vine a special watch must be kept. Planting with native shrubs to give quick cover will help repress the germination of seedlings.

With established vines winter is the best time to begin cutting, especially those difficult ones where the vine is spread along a fence or over the ground. With the leaves fallen the root system can be seen and attacked methodically. Those covering the ground can be rolled up as cutting proceeds to release the roll from the numerous rooted sections.

Vines that are climbing up into trees should be cut with tree loppers, secateurs, or a sharp knife about 30 cm above ground level. Follow up each stem and cut it again about eye level. This makes a gap which shows up the stem still to be cut and identifies the site as one being treated.

Leave the vines that are in the tree tops; you will waste energy and become disheartened if you try to haul them out. Vines left in the trees will die and eventually rot. Carry away and burn or bury the cut sections.

When cutting vines in spring or early summer carry out the operation above and then apply a systemic herbicide to each severed stem showing above the root system. Wear rubber gloves and apply the herbicide with a brush or squeeze bottle. If all cutting is complete, and one member of a working party goes systematically over the area, there is no risk to others from handling material that has been treated.

Winter-cut vines do not respond to herbicide as well as those with active sap. Leave the poisoning of them until a return visit in spring, when a

further 3 cm of the ground stem can be cut off and the herbicide applied.

Plants can be killed without poison if visits are made every week to rub off new shoots as they appear. This is practicable, but time consuming and better suits plants in home gardens.

The purpose in cutting is to stop the season's flowering and seed setting; so concentrate effort into the 6 months from June to November. Winter cutting also frees trees from the smothering of the dense new growth put out by old man's beard which has covered them. But cutting at any time is useful; so make it a year-round campaign.

Recording of sites

Once a site has been found a record should be made by the member or by the group. Identify the site with a numbered stake which relates to the record listing location, date, action taken, etc. Return visits can then be straight to the right location and information correctly credited.

Each branch committee should collate reports in its area and use them in its own control programme or pass them on to a local authority programme. Head office of the Society wants reports from all branches where old man's beard is found and these will be passed on to the Department of Lands and Survey, which is keeping a national record.

Getting help

The thrust of this article is to ask individual members to play a personal part in fighting old man's beard. Our efforts can be multiplied if other groups and authorities join in.

Branch committees should write to their local city, borough, or county council and ask it to take action. They