



Goutweed (*Aegopodium podagraria*)

Goutweed or Bishop's weed (*Aegopodium podagraria*) is tough to banish from the garden, but it can be removed with perseverance.

- Your control efforts should focus on preventing the spread of this invasive species. **Focus on edges first, reversing the invasion front.**
- When removing any invasive plant, NEVER dump them anywhere other than garbage or in designated soil treatment areas at landfills. Special care needs to be taken when the homeowner lives in an area where garbage is dumped in a local bin. Please consult your municipality if in doubt.
- Any plants removed should be kept in heavy, dark garbage bags.
- Property lines: Removal along a fence or property line is most effective when neighbours work together. Barriers may not be enough to stop the spread of goutweed into your garden.
- Soil: Take care when sharing any plants from the area in your garden that has goutweed in case you inadvertently spread the plant to the gardens of friends or neighbours.
- Replant the area with plants as soon as you're sure the area is free of goutweed. This will stop other invasive plants from taking hold. Replanting with native plants is highly recommended.
- Goutweed is herbicide resistant, so even if it were allowed, it is not recommended.
- Goutweed has limited spread via seed, but will spread rapidly via rhizomes.

How you decide to remove goutweed will depend on the extent of the infestation and your physical ability to deal with it. You will likely need a five-year plan and will have to inspect the area regularly, adjusting strategies according to your progress. Here are some options:

Digging & Removal (smaller areas)

- Most effective when the soil is moist, after a rain, especially in clay soils.
- Work on one section of the garden at a time, e.g. a square meter, sq foot. Set yourself a schedule to do this daily or at least a few times a week.
- Dig out and remove entire goutweed plant, sifting out rhizomes as much as possible.
- Store plants in heavy, dark garbage bags while awaiting disposal in garbage.
- Continue to remove goutweed plants from new sections.
- Monitor recurrence in cleared areas regularly-at least once a week.
- Dig out any new plants as they re-appear continuing to remove as much of the rhizome as possible.
- Repeat inspection and removal REGULARLY until there are no longer any goutweed plants for about a year.

- Continue to monitor the area even after the plant is eradicated.
- Replant the area with native plants to avoid other invasive plants from taking hold.
- This process will likely take several years or more with vigilant monitoring

Smothering (medium to large areas)

- Care should be taken if there are trees or large shrubs in area
- Can be started any time of year
- Cut the goutweed at ground level if it is growing, using a hoe or sharp spade.
- Cover the cleared area with heavy black plastic or tarps to block sunlight and starve plants of water.
- Weigh the heavy plastic/tarps to keep in place, e.g. rocks, branches, bricks, tent pegs.
- Leave in place and check progress each season. Continue to smother as needed. Smothering can take up to 2 years.
- If area is very large, work in sections, covering with tarp/dark plastic as you clear an area.
- Replant the area when goutweed has been eliminated and tarp removed.
- A thick layer of cardboard or leaf bags/mulch may also be used to smother, especially if in the vicinity of trees or shrubs. See link about "The "Cover and Smother" Approach to Goutweed Control" below for more information

Solarizing (medium to large areas)

- Should only be used if there are no trees or large shrubs in area
- Best started in late spring when plants emerge
- Not recommended in low light areas
- Cut the goutweed at ground level using a hoe or sharp spade.
- Water the soil deeply until it is wet.
- Cover the cleared area with CLEAR plastic (such as 1 to 4 mil painter's plastic) to allow sun to "cook" plants. Clear polyethylene sheets or rolls are available from places like Lowes or Home Depot.
- Bury the plastic edges in the soil to trap the heat.
- Leave the plastic in place for at least 4 to 6 weeks in the hottest part of the summer.
- If area is very large, work in sections, covering with plastic as you clear an area.
- Remove the plastic and inspect. Continue to solarise as needed.
- Replant the area when goutweed has been eliminated and plastic removed.
- See link about "Solarizing" below for more information

References

- Credit Valley Conservation – Goutweed <https://cvc.ca/your-land-water/tree-planting-and-habitat-restoration-services/invasive-species/invasive-species-spotlights/invasive-plants-spotlight/goutweed-aegopodium-podagraria/>
- How to Solarize Invasive Plants
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- “Cover and Smother” Approach to Goutweed Control
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- HOW TO FIGHT PLANTS WITH PLANTS <https://www.humanegardener.com/how-to-fight-plants-with-plants/>
- Controlling and Disposing of Non-native and Invasive Species
<https://www.ontarioparks.com/documents/content/10/172>