



# Invasive Plant Alert<sup>1</sup>

## Himalayan blackberry

*Rubus bifrons* Vest ex Tratt.  
(Also known as *R. armeniacus* or *R. procerus*.)

*Rubus bifrons* is a growing threat in the Southeast and the Mid-Atlantic. It can establish dense stands that crowd out native blackberries and other vegetation.



Figure 1 Floral display of *R. bifrons*. (reported as *R. armeniacus*) John M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org

## Where to Look

*Rubus bifrons* is native to Europe and has become increasingly widespread in the United States. Its geographic distribution covers most eastern and southern states, Arizona, and the west coast. It was first reported in Virginia in 2010 and in Maryland in 2000. In our region it has been found in Fort Dupont Park. *Rubus bifrons* is found in a wide variety of habitats.

## Identifying the Plant

*R. bifrons* is a perennial evergreen shrub with thick arching stems and large thorns. Its leaves are large, rounded to oblong, toothed, and often in groups of five. The plant's floral display is showy, with clusters of small white to

pink flowers. The green fruits ripen to red then black in late summer, and are edible.



Figure 2 Edible fruit of *R. bifrons*. Andrea Moro - Berlin, Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Germania

*Rubus bifrons* looks similar to other members of the genus. Unlike most other *Rubus*, *R. bifrons* has leaves with felted, white undersides and large spines. The native *Rubus cuneifolius* has distinctly wedge-shaped leaflets.



Figure 3 Arching stems of the *R. bifrons* shrub. Andrea Moro - Berlin, Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Germania

## How do I get rid of it?

Control is difficult. Plants can be pulled or dug up or removed mechanically by removing the roots.

However, treating the canes with a systemic herbicide may be more effective. There are no reported biological controls for this plant.



Figure 4 Toothed leaflets of *R. bifrons*, clustered in groups of five. Andrea Moro - Berlin, Botanischer Garten und Botanisches Museum Berlin-Dahlem, Germania

## Resources

Information and photos are by permission of the Institute for Applied Ecology, and from its *Field Guide to Weeds of the Oregon Coast* (2012) <http://appliedeco.org/invasive-species-resources/weed-guides/>

Go Botany *Rubus* page <https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org/genus/rubus/>

<sup>1</sup> This species has been identified as a potential or emerging threat to natural areas in the mid-Atlantic region