



# Whatcom Weeds

Whatcom County Noxious Weed Control Board 322 N. Commercial St Bellingham WA 98225  
(360) 778-6234 [www.whatcomcounty.us/914/Weeds](http://www.whatcomcounty.us/914/Weeds)

## ITALIAN ARUM

### *Arum italicum*

**THREAT:** Italian arum, a native to Europe, was introduced to North America as a garden ornamental. It escapes cultivation and invades open woodlands and forest margins. Reproduction is by seed and by bulblets. Bulblets are produced by the roots and break off in the soil to produce new plants. All parts of the plant are poisonous. If eaten, it causes burning, swelling and severe pain of the lips, mouth, tongue and throat. Contact with the sap can cause minor skin irritation. It prefers full sun to partial shade, and moist, well-drained, humus-rich soils. It is currently on the Washington State Noxious Weed Board's Monitor List (non-regulatory).



**DESCRIPTION:** Italian arum is a tuberous perennial that grows up to 1½ feet high. The arrow-shaped, glossy leaves, which grow up to a foot long, have long stalks, and are grayish green with pale green midribs. The tiny white flowers are borne together in a finger-like structure, partly surrounded by a large, sheath-like bract. After flowering, the leaves and bract wither away, leaving a stalk of bright orange red berries. New leaves emerge in the autumn and will stay evergreen throughout the winter in warmer climates. In colder areas the leaves die back and reemerge in the spring.

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** Control of this weed is difficult, due to the small bulblets that remain in the soil after the plants are removed or treated with herbicides. Mowing is reportedly ineffective. Some herbicides may be effective when painted on fresh cut stalks. Contact the weed board for site-specific chemical recommendations or visit the Board's website at <http://www.co.whatcom.wa.us/930/Noxious-Weed-Fact-Sheets> for the publication: "Control Options for Italian Arum"

