


Fire risk report for *Rubus discolor*

Full Species Name <i>Rubus discolor</i> Weihe & Nees
Family: Rosaceae
Common names: Himalayan blackberry
Synonyms: <i>Rubus armeniacus</i>
Known occurrences (as of 2020) 
Year first documented as naturalized in Hawai'i: 1997
This species has been ranked by the Hawai'i Weed Risk Assessment program as High Risk with a score of 24.
View photos on Starr Environmental
View on Wikipedia
View occurrences on iNaturalist
View at Plants of Hawaii
View photos on Flickr

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Lowest risk ⇔ Highest risk

This species is likely a **low** fire risk in Hawai'i with a fire risk score of **0.17**.

This species was ranked by 49 managers on a scale of 'no risk', 'low risk', 'medium risk', or 'high risk'. The numerical score ranges from 0 to 1 with higher scores indicating more managers considered it a higher risk. A score of > .31 indicates high risk.

Summary of Fire ecology	
Native habitat fire proneness	Fire-prone
Fire promoting plant in its native range	No
Fire promoting plant in its introduced range*	Yes
Regenerates after fire	Yes
Promoted by fire	Yes
Reported flammable*	High
Relative is flammable*	Yes

*These values were used by the model to predict fire risk

Detailed summary of Fire Ecology

Native habitat fire proneness (In any part of the plant's native range is its habitat described as fire prone due to natural or human caused fires?)	Fire-prone	<p>"Rubus discolor is native to western Europe "</p> <p>http://www.hear.org/starr/hiplants/reports/pdf/rubus_discolor.pdf</p> <p>-----</p> <p>"Himalayan blackberry grows in vacant lots, logging sites, burned areas, along rivers, roads, fences, and railroad tracks."</p> <p>https://data.fs.usda.gov/research/pubs/iitf/iitf_gtr026.pdf#page=662</p> <p>Francis, John. "Rubus Discolor Weihe & Nees." In Wildland Shrubs of the United States and Its Territories: Thamnic Descriptions, 652–54. USDA, 2004.</p>
Fire promoting plant in its native range (Does the species act as a major fuel source, increase fire severity, frequency, or modify fuel bed characteristics within its native range?)	No	
Fire promoting plant in its introduced range (Same as Fire Promoting Native but within the species introduced range)	Yes	<p>"R. armeniacus may create a fire hazard by producing a large biomass of senesced canes"</p> <p>Caplan, Joshua, and Alan Yeakley. "Rubus Armeniacus (Himalayan Blackberry) Occurrence and Growth in Relation to Soil and Light Conditions in Western Oregon." Northwest Science 80, no. 1 (2006): 9.</p>
Regenerates after fire (Does the plant regrow after fire by any means? This includes resprouters, reseeder, and recruiters which dispersed into the area within approximately one year post fire)	Yes	<p>"Like most other Rubus species, Himalayan blackberry resprouts vigorously after fire, especially from underground rhizomes, often creating more of a blackberry issue than initially present (Willoughby and Davilla 1984). "</p> <p>https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/downloads/tm70mz83f</p> <p>Ensley, J. L. (2015). Comparing Himalayan blackberry (Rubus armeniacus) management techniques in upland prairie communities of the WL Finley National Wildlife Refuge.</p>
Promoted by fire (Does the plant increase in abundance after a fire?)	Yes	<p>"With all burn-associated treatments showing either greater plant density or less of a decrease than the mow only treatment, it is evident that fire stimulates Himalayan blackberry growth"</p>

		https://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/downloads/tm70mz83f Ensley, J. L. (2015). Comparing Himalayan blackberry (<i>Rubus armeniacus</i>) management techniques in upland prairie communities of the WL Finley National Wildlife Refuge. ----- "The Himalayan blackberry is well adapted to invade recently burned sites. Most blackberries sprout vigorously after fire [9]." https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/shrub/rubarm/all.html#FIRE%20ECOLOGY
Reported flammable (Is the species described as being flammable, being a major wildfire fuel, or high fire risk?)	High	"R. armeniacus may create a fire hazard by producing a large biomass of senesced canes" Caplan, Joshua, and Alan Yeakley. "Rubus Armeniacus (Himalayan Blackberry) Occurrence and Growth in Relation to Soil and Light Conditions in Western Oregon." Northwest Science 80, no. 1 (2006): 9.
Relative is flammable (Does a plant in the same genus meet the Reported Flammable criteria?)	Yes	"[Rubus fruticosus L. flammability in Summer and Autumn from Table 2 was a 2: "Flammable"]" https://doi.org/10.1016/S0960-8524(96)00083-1 Nunez-Regueira, Lisardo, J Anon, and J Castineiras. "Calorific Values and Flammability of Forest Species in Galicia. Coastal and Hillside Zones." Bioresource Technology 57 (1996): 283–89. ----- "[Rubus spp. had a score of 6, which is medium to low flammability]" http://idahofirewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/FireXResistanceXofXPlantsXMast erXDatabase.pdf

Text in quotes are direct quotes from the source

Text in square brackets was added by the assessor to clarify something or to summarize from a figure.

Text preceded by a “#” is comment from the assessor

The data presented were assembled from literature and database searches for each species using as much data as could be collected regarding the plant’s fire ecology under natural conditions. Searches aimed to be exhaustive and consist of as much data as could be located in 2020. Our machine learning algorithm was trained on 49 species of plants which had their fire risk ranked by 49 managers in Hawai’i in November 2020. The model used a conditional random forest regression algorithm to predict scores for each species using the manager score as the response variable and the fire ecology traits of each plant as the predictor variables to generate

a fire risk score. This trained model was then used to predict the fire risk for all species which were not ranked by managers. The model was calibrated such that it is 90% accurate at predicting high fire risk plants and 79% accurate at predicting low fire risk plants. This research and the resulting fire risk model has been published in the journal [Biological Invasions](#) by [Kevin Faccenda](#) and [Curt Daehler](#) (both at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa).

Note that the analysis doesn't account for a plant species' spatial distribution, population density, or distinct climate and ecosystem conditions (which can also influence fire risk). The fire risk of these species are mostly under "worst case" environmental conditions where the climate is dry enough to maintain fire, but wet enough to allow for plant growth and fuel accumulation. The fire risk ranking should not be taken as a stand-alone risk metric in prioritizing weed control efforts. Rather, this information may also be useful for determining if a newly discovered species poses a potential fire threat in wildland areas.

More general information on the weed risks and ecology of non-native plants in Hawai'i is available from the Hawai'i Invasive Species Committee's [Weed Risk Assessment database](#).

View more fact sheets at <https://www.pacificfireexchange.org/weed-fire-risk-assessments>

Fact sheet prepared by Kevin Faccenda (faccenda@hawaii.edu) in November 2021. Data were prepared by Ronja Steinbach and Kevin Faccenda in 2020.

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