

How to Run Your Own Ivy-Clearing Event (A Short Guide from Save Our Trees)



May, 2023

Discouragingly, English ivy continues to expand throughout our county imperiling our tree canopy and running roughshod over our forest floors. On a more positive note, more and more people and organizations are recognizing the problem and want to tackle the ivy on their own properties or nearby. Save Our Tree's (SOT) motto is "Be the Ripple!" By clearing the ivy on your property and in your neighborhood and parks, you are encouraging your community to join the fight!

This guide will help you set up and organize your own ivy-clearing event. As always, SOT will help to make your event successful and can provide guidance and expertise.

1. Advance Preparation

- Determine property ownership.
- Secure permission for an ivy-clearing event.
- Consider whether a liability waiver is needed.

2. Get to Know the Problem Area

- Walk the site and identify the areas that are most affected.
- Prioritize these areas and decide where you will focus your volunteers' efforts during the event.
- Be realistic; some large trees with ivy all the way around the trunk may take an hour or more, while smaller ones with less of an infestation may take 10 or fewer minutes.

3. Pick a Date and Time

- Choose a date and time for your event that doesn't conflict with major local happenings and is okay with the property owner (e.g., the HOA, the city or the county) from whom you are obtaining event permission.
- We recommend an event that runs from 9:45 a.m. to noon. This amount of time helps focus interest and lets folks see that they can accomplish a lot during a small part of their day.

4. Spread the Word

- Talk up your event.
- Spread the word through flyers, neighborhood newsletters and word of mouth.
- Use social media, including Facebook, Next Door and Instagram to let people know and generate excitement. Next Door, specifically, is a great way to find volunteers.

5. Sign Up Volunteers

- We use SignUp Genius, a free online tool to keep track of volunteers. This tool captures the name, email and phone number of each person who signs up. It also allows you to email the volunteers en masse. Go to www.signupgenius.com and search for the free version. This online tool offers easy volunteer management and event planning.
- Set up a spreadsheet to keep a record of your volunteers and their pertinent information.

6. Keep in Touch with Volunteers

- Several days before the event, let your volunteers know what to expect, what to bring and what to wear.
- Provide directions to the site and where they can park.
- Advise them to bring drinking water, loppers, pruners, gloves, hori hori knives or screwdrivers (to pry ivy stems from the tree trunks) and small tree saws; they should label tools with their names.
- Let them know that having their own tools is not necessary; you will have extras to share.

- Emphasize that long-sleeved shirts and pants are preferable due to the possibility of ticks and poison ivy.
- Amend any instructions a day or two before, based on the weather forecast.

7. Registration Table

- Set up a table that is staffed by at least one person.
- Make sure all volunteers register and sign the liability waiver* required by the property owner (if needed).
- Find the appropriate waiver form based on the owner of the property that you are working on. The city and county each have forms. Individual HOAs or community groups may have their own forms.

8. Supplies to Have on Hand at Event

- Have extra tools including pruners, gloves, hori hori knives, screwdrivers and small tree saws. A few people should bring mini chainsaws to help with the thickest vines.
- Have a first-aid kit, informational handouts, a few plastic bags for trash, bug spray, water, Ivy-X or Tecnu (poison ivy oil remover) along with Sharpies and duct tape to label tools.
- SOT puts brightly colored cloth ribbons around some of the trees that we save. These ribbons alert passersby about the tree-saving actions that you are taking. If you would like to do the same, bring bright cotton fabric strips that volunteers can tie around the cleared trees. SOT has also created signs to accompany the ribbons, explaining their purpose.

9. Prior To Event Start

- Gather everyone before spreading into the work area and talk about the goals, how to remove the ivy, trash pickup and trees-saved counts.
- Give a short demonstration of how to remove ivy from about 4 feet above the ground down to the ground. Show them how to remove the ivy roots from the dirt around the base of the tree to create a “circle of life.”
- Emphasize that volunteers must sign out when they leave the event (for safety reasons) and at the same time record the number of trees that they have freed from ivy.

10. During The Event

- Move around from volunteer to volunteer to ensure that each is using the proper technique for ivy removal.
- Ensure that use of tools is correct and safe.
- Use one of several options for ivy disposal.
 - o If you are only removing a small amount of ivy, you can bag it and put it in your trash (don't put in in the yard waste receptacle as pieces of ivy may remain viable).
 - o If you have a lot of ivy, you can spread it in a thin layer out on the ground to dry out (rendering it non-viable).
 - o If you have a lot of ivy and are concerned that it might re-root, lay the ivy out on a tarp to dry. If you can put it in the sun, the process will go more quickly.

11. Post Event

- Send out an email to thank volunteers. Let them know how important their work was and how many trees were saved.
- Invite them to any future events.
- Leave a sign at the site that explains ivy removal and how others can get involved (if you have permission).
- Report the number of trees freed from ivy to saveourtreesogether@gmail.com

Additional Tasks That May Help

Signage:

Create a few signs that let people know what's going on. (Sample signs are at the end of this document.

- Use these at the event, but also place a few days prior (with any necessary permission). People passing might be encouraged to sign up, so include contact information for event volunteering.

What SOT Can Provide:

- Prior to your initial event, SOT can come for a site visit to talk to others in your community, provide guidance on the best approach and advise you on the best tools for your particular situation.
- For your initial event, you may request a Save Our Trees representative to instruct the volunteer group on how to clear ivy properly.
- SOT can also provide a digital file for your event communications with invitations, signage and other useful materials.

Sample Documents Follow:

- Sign-in/sign-out event forms
- Volunteer interest form
- SOT feedback form
- SOT information and mission flyer
- Sample event flyer
- Sample signs

Note: *SOT can provide digital versions of these documents upon request.*

* Ensure that you have the correct liability waiver form, dependent upon the owner of the land that you are working on. The city and county each have separate forms; your HOA may have a form of its own.

Save Our Trees



Volunteer Sign Up (please print clearly)

<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p>	<p>How would you like to get involved with Save Our Trees? (Please check which apply):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer at a 'Save Our Trees' event to cut ivy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer to deliver 'Save Our Trees' door hangers in communities where trees are ivy-covered</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Invite us to speak at your meetings, community associations, or neighborhood gatherings</p>
<p>Name: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Phone: _____</p>	<p>How would you like to get involved with Save Our Trees? (Please check which apply):</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer at a 'Save Our Trees' event to cut ivy</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer to deliver 'Save Our Trees' door hangers in communities where trees are ivy-covered</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Invite us to speak at your meetings, community associations, or neighborhood gatherings</p>
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Event Feedback Form

(Please use the back if you need additional space)

Please take a few moments to answer the following questions. Your answers will help us refine our approach in helping communities that are tackling invasive vines. Sharing your experience also helps us inspire others to become more vigilant caretakers of their own properties.

Name of neighborhood or group holding event:

Date of event:

How many people attended your event?

How many trees did you clear of ivy?

Please briefly describe how your event went and if there were any issues:

How helpful did you find the Event How-To Guide? Was there any information that you felt was missing?

What worked well for your event? Do you have suggestions on ways to make an event better?

Is there anything else that Save Our Trees can do to assist your efforts going forward?

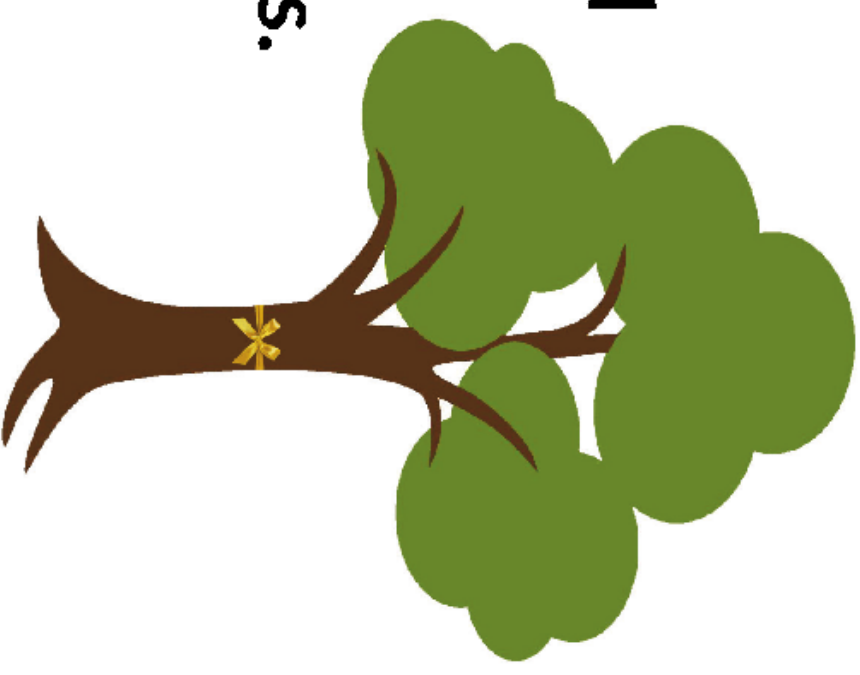
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Sample

SAVE OUR TREES

There are RIBBONS around our trees!

The **colored ribbons** tied around the tree trunks show we have saved the trees from invasive vines.



Contact us for more information at
saveourtrees.org



Tree-Saving



Zone

SAVE OUR TREES

What's Going On Here?! We're Saving Trees!

They need our *HELP* because English ivy is killing them!

- Ivy climbs tree trunks and branches and steals the sunshine, water, and nutrients they need to stay healthy
- When ivy infests the canopy treetop, it adds significant weight to the branches, causing trees to fall in strong winds.
- Ivy harbors mosquitoes by holding moisture against the bark.

Learn more about how you can help save the trees.



*Contact us for more information at:
saveourtrees.org*



