

GERANIUM LUCIDUM:

PROPOSAL TO DESIGNATE AS A WASHINGTON STATE CLASS A NOXIOUS WEED

Scientific Name: *Geranium lucidum*

Common Name: Shining geranium

Description: *Geranium lucidum* grows predominantly as an annual weed though it may become biennial depending on moisture conditions. In Europe, it is described as growing up to 0.5 meters high and being very shade intolerant. Here in the Pacific Northwest, it is predominantly a forest understory species, very shade tolerant and only seen up to 10-12" high. Stems are red-colored growing from a weak central root. Leaves are rounded, deeply lobed with a beautiful waxy appearance that makes dense infestations easy to recognize. Flowers are pink with five petals and grow interspersed within the leaves not above them.

Growth characteristics: *Geranium lucidum* sprouts in the late summer or early fall with the first heavy rainstorm of the season. By early spring, patches of *G. lucidum* are very pronounced. During April and May, dense low-lying patches form and flowering commences. By late June and July, seed formation is complete and the plant material melts down into the forest floor. The seeds are small and easily transported to uninfected areas by foot traffic, vehicles and wildlife.

Habitat: Shiny-leaf geranium grows in the Pacific Northwest predominantly as an understory species intermixed with grasses, forbs and moss. Oak woodlands and forest openings are ideal locations for *G. lucidum* to establish and dominate. Conifer forests offer suitable habitat for *G. lucidum* though dense second growth plantations often create excessive shade, limiting growth and density.

Geographic Distribution: *Geranium lucidum* is common throughout much of Eurasia from the British Isles through the Middle East to the Himalayas and India. It also grows in North Africa. Used throughout history as a medicinal plant, it has probably been introduced in many other locations around the world.

US Distribution: In the United States it has been recorded in Alameda County, California and Oregon. In Oregon it is found from Lane County north to Multnomah County (and all counties between) with one outlying population in Coos County.

Washington Distribution: This species appears to have recently moved into Washington. According to the University of Washington, this species was found in Clark County, near the Skamania County border in 2005 (and relocated in same location in 2006). It was found in Skagit County in 2006.

Rational for listing: *Geranium lucidum* has a very limited distribution in Washington. Its effects in oak woodlands, seasonally wet ash forests and on forest edges in Oregon have become quite pronounced. Utilizing the abundance of early spring moisture, *Geranium lucidum* in Oregon has quickly established and dominated sites pushing out many other early season wildflowers and seedlings of perennial plants. As soils dry few other plants are able to establish on the receding weed canopy and establish. This species is also already becoming widespread in western Oregon. Listing this species in Washington will hopefully encourage control of this species before it is widely established.