

“B” Rated Weeds

A weed of economic importance which is regionally abundant,
but may have limited distribution in some counties

Old man’s beard
Clematis vitalba

Other common names: Traveler’s joy

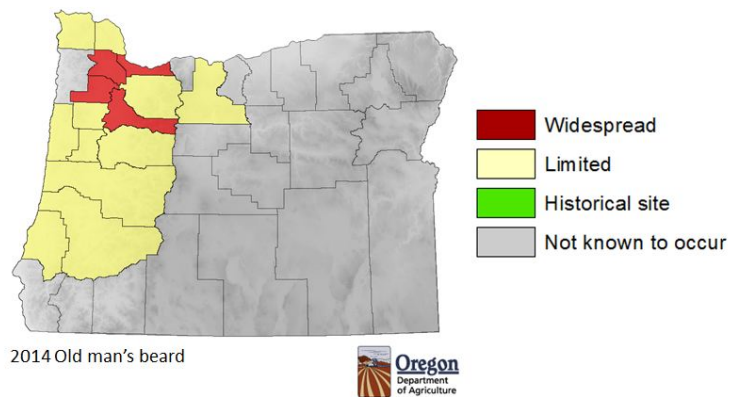
USDA symbol: CLVI6
ODA rating: B



Distribution in Oregon: Old man’s beard is a pest in northwestern Oregon.

Introduction: This European native was introduced as a garden plant in the United States.

Description: Old man’s bear is a perennial that blooms most of summer. It is a woody deciduous vine with stems growing up to thirty yards long. The leaves are opposite and compound, usually with five leaflets. Flowers are small, greenish white and found in clusters in the upper leaf axils. The characteristic feathery seed heads give this climber its name. Young vines are ribbed and often purple in color. Older vines are woody, often grayish brown in color and flake when bent.



Impacts: Old man’s bear capacity to spread to the rest of the state is likely to occur due to its excellent dispersal methods. It spreads mainly by seeds being transported by wind, water and in soil or gravel. Fragments of the vines are also spread as garden waste that can take root and form new plants. In areas where this creeper has naturalized, it blankets shrubs and native trees over 60 feet tall. Once a tree collapses, the plant continues to grow along the ground in layers that are several feet thick, preventing the regeneration of any vegetation below it. It affects the ecosystem by killing trees and increasing the amount of dead material in the forest. By killing native woody plants, Old man’s beard destroys food sources for native species, including birds, lizards and insects. Each plant can produce more than 100,000 seeds in a year. This destructive garden escapee spreads quickly along river margins, but will establish in any area not intensively managed or grazed. The habitat of this creeper includes roadsides, riverbanks, gardens, hedges, shelter belts, disturbed forest and forest edges.

Biological controls: No approved biological control agents are available at this time.

