

Herb Robert

Geranium robertianum

Introduction: Herb Robert (occasionally called Stinky Bob), or *Geranium robertianum*, is a common species in Europe, Asia and North Africa. This plant is exotic to North America, is found in all five northwestern states (ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY), and is considered a Class B noxious weed in Washington.

Description: Herb Robert grows as an annual or biennial plant that produces small pink flowers from April to the autumn months. The leaves of the plant are fern-like and the stems are mostly redish and the leaves turn red at the end of the flowering season. Herb Robert has little root structure, and prefers shady spots and spreads by seed.

Habitat: Herb Robert is a shade lover, so is most often found in forest understories. Herb Robert can grow at altitudes of up to 1500 meters. In England, Herb Robert is found in gardening hedges. Because of this use, it has been introduced into other temperate parts of the world, probably through its use as a garden plant. It has become fairly widespread in western Oregon and Washington in coniferous forests at low elevations. And although it is considered a noxious weed

Uses: Herb Robert is quite useful in many traditional herbalism remedies. It is used for such ailments as toothache, nosebleed and dysentery. It is also used on wounds, having both an antiseptic and a styptic effect. Freshly picked leaves have a peculiar odor when crushed, and if they are rubbed on the body, the smell is said to repel mosquitoes.



Photo @ Bruce Newhouse

Management Information: Herb Robert is easily pulled; the fibrous roots do not resprout if pieces are left in the soil. Weed killers used on Herb Robert include Dichlobenil (prevents emergence of seedlings among established woody plants, for up to one year) and Glyphosate (a systemic which kills the root).

Similar Species: Shining geranium (*Geranium lucidum*), is a more recent invader of shady areas, and more tolerant of drier forests. It is similar in growth form, but the leaves are less dissected, and more rounded (see Shining Geranium fact sheet).

References

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herb_Robert

www.answers.com/topic/herb-robert

<http://invader.dbs.umt.edu/queryplant2.asp>

*This fact sheet has been reformatted from one written by Caitlin Van Patten, a student at McMinnville High School, for the Western Invasive Network, as a part of the *Partners in Prevention* program. It was reviewed by Tom Kaye, Institute for Applied Ecology, and Bruce Newhouse, Botanist/ecologist, Salix Associates.