

Hi Neil,

Here is a summary of our approach to holly on CFB Esquimalt lands: With support from NRCan (the Canadian Forest Service), CFB Esquimalt manages about 4000 ha of land that include large natural areas and significant populations of species at risk. Invasive species are a major challenge in these natural areas, and DND devotes considerable funds to the control of high-priority species like broom, gorse, holly, and others. When removing holly, we employ three different methods. The smallest plants, up to about the diameter of a pencil, we pull out by hand. Anything larger than that is likely to break off and resprout. We have two different approaches for the larger plants, which includes everything from a bit more than pencil sized to large trees. In the most sensitive areas, we cut the plant near ground level and apply the herbicide garlon directly to the cut stem. This is a highly effective method for killing the stump so that it doesn't resprout. We use either a paintbrush or bingo dauber-like applicator so there is no chance of overspray and the herbicide doesn't contact anything except the holly stump. In less sensitive areas, we have contractors spray the holly directly with the same herbicide, garlon. Plants are sprayed on the basal bark and take up to several months to die. While this method has a possibility of overspray and damage to adjacent vegetation, we have high standards with our contractors and we see very little actual damage to native species. We commonly see native shrubs like snowberry or oceanspray growing intertwined with dead holly without showing any sign of damage themselves. The reason that we rely so heavily on herbicide for holly in particular is the very persistent resprouting that occurs after mechanical treatment. If we were to just cut the holly and leave it, we would be cutting the same holly plants every year for the rest of our careers and we would never get control. The oldest holly plant in the world is estimated at more than six hundred years old, so they will definitely win the waiting game. Instead, we apply these small amounts of herbicide for a short period of time until we achieve control and then we don't need to do it again. New plants can be pulled once control of the population is achieved. We have effectively removed holly from tens of hectares using these methods. Best of luck with your efforts on holly in public lands.

James Miskelly

Forestry Officer, Pacific Forestry Centre
Natural Resources Canada / Government of Canada
james.miskelly@nrcan-rncan.gc.ca / Tel: 778-535-6380 (mobile)

Agent forestier, Centre de foresterie du Pacifique

Ressources naturelles Canada / Gouvernement du Canada