

Black Nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) **also called** **Blackberry Nightshade**



Identifying characteristics

This bushy, herbaceous annual is found in temperate to tropical regions and can grow up to 80 cm high. The stems are green, but can turn purple as the plant ages, so you may find a mix of green and purple shades.

It has long, oval-shaped, dark green leaves, with undulating edges.

The flowers are white, star-shaped with five points and have yellow centres. Black nightshade berries are green at first, darkening to a very dark almost black colour with age. Each fruit can contain up to 35 seeds.

Interesting facts

- Black nightshade seeds can stay dormant in the soil for more than 40 years waiting for the right conditions!
- This plant has food and medicinal uses around the world, but some studies show that high levels of consumption can lead to poisoning, so it is not recommended to eat.

Management and removal

The plant can become invasive and can attract nematodes, viruses and fungi that can be detrimental to the soil and the plants growing in it, especially those of the Solanaceae family such as tomatoes. Remove any seedlings as soon as they appear and are identified. Hand removal is the most effective form of organic management for this weed. As flowering and seed/fruit formation begins early in summer, spring removal of the seedlings is highly recommended. The plant can be composted if it has not flowered; otherwise destroy it or add it to the regular rubbish to avoid spreading the seed further afield.