

# Salmonberry

(*Rubus spectabilis*)



**Family name:** Rosaceae (Rose family)  
**Common name/s:** Salmonberry



**Salmonberry** (*Rubus spectabilis*) is a deciduous shrub. In Ireland, it has naturalised in some areas where it can form dense thickets that outcompete native vegetation, particularly in woodlands and riparian zones.

The plant spreads through both seed dispersal and rhizome expansion, making management challenging. Control strategies include mechanical removal, herbicide use, and preventative measures to limit its spread. If left unmanaged, Salmonberry can significantly impact local biodiversity and forest regeneration.

**Description** - Salmonberry is noted for its raspberry-like fruits, bright pink flowers and dense growth habit. It was introduced to parts of Europe, including Ireland, as an ornamental plant. However, it can become invasive in some regions, spreading rapidly and forming dense thickets that outcompete native vegetation.

The plant's ability to thrive in moist, temperate environments makes it a significant concern for natural habitats.

**Key characteristics include:**



**Height:** Can grow to a height of 1-4 metres, forming dense, arching thickets.

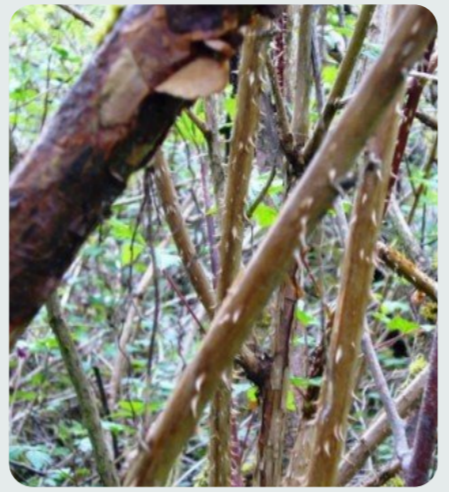
**Leaves:** The leaves are pinnately compound, typically with three leaflets. Each leaflet is oval with toothed edges, and they can measure 5-15 cm in length. The leaves are bright green and turn yellow in autumn before falling.

**Flowers:** Produces bright pink to magenta flowers, each about 2-3 cm in diameter, with five petals.

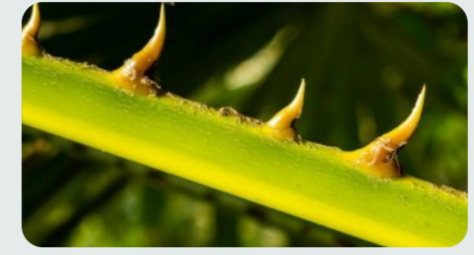
The flowers appear from March to June, often before the leaves are fully developed.



**Fruit:** The fruit resembles a large raspberry, typically yellow to orange-red when ripe, measuring 1-2 cm in diameter. The berries are edible and mildly sweet but can be bland compared to other berries.



**Stem:** Stems are erect to arching. New stems are green and armed with prickles. Older stems have light brown / orange bark that is thin, papery, ex-foliates and has scattered fine prickles that ex-foliate.



The young stems are hairy, while older stems are more woody.



**Root:** Has an extensive rhizomatous root system, allowing it to spread and form large colonies.

**Habitat** - Salmonberry is native to the west coast of North America, where it grows in a range of moist habitats. In its introduced range, it thrives in:

- Woodlands and Forests: Often found in moist, shaded areas within woodlands, especially along forest edges and clearings.
- Riparian Zones: Commonly grows along streams, rivers, and wetlands, where soil moisture is consistently high.
- Disturbed Areas: Can establish in disturbed or open areas, such as roadsides and logged sites, where it can rapidly colonise bare ground.

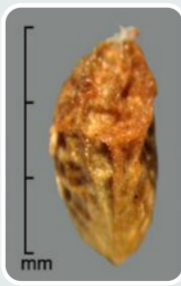
The plant prefers moist, well-drained soils and thrives in cool, temperate climates. It can tolerate a range of light conditions, from full sun to deep shade, but grows best in partial shade.

**Status in Ireland** - In Ireland, Salmonberry is considered a non-native species that has naturalised in some areas, particularly in woodlands and riparian zones.

While not as aggressively invasive as some other species, it can still pose a risk by forming dense thickets that displace native understory plants and alter habitat structure.

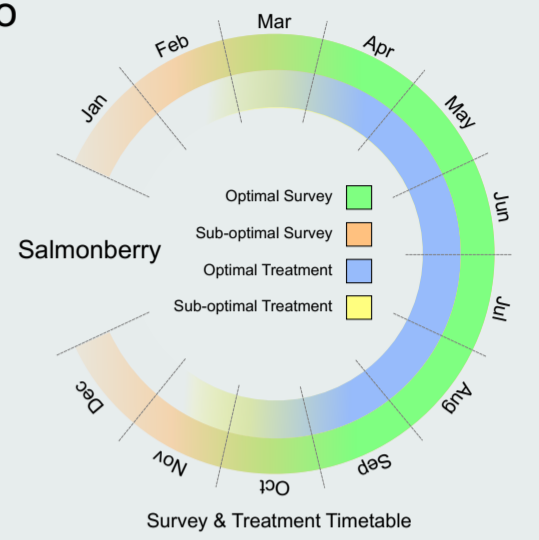
**Reproduction and Spread** - Salmonberry reproduces through both seed production and vegetative propagation:

- Seed Dispersal: The plant produces numerous seeds within the berries, which are dispersed by birds and mammals that eat the fruit.
- Rhizome Expansion: The plant spreads extensively through its rhizomatous root system, which allows it to colonise large areas and form dense stands. New shoots can sprout from the rhizomes, leading to the expansion of existing colonies.



**Management and Control** - Controlling Salmonberry can be challenging due to its extensive rhizome network and ability to regenerate from root fragments. Management strategies include:

- Mechanical Control: Cutting or pulling up plants can reduce biomass, but care must be taken to remove all root material to prevent regrowth. Repeated cutting may be necessary to weaken the plant over time.
- Chemical Control: Herbicides may be used to manage larger infestations, particularly if applied to cut stumps or regrowth. Multiple applications over several years may be needed for effective control.
- Integrated Management: Combining mechanical and chemical methods, such as cutting followed by herbicide application, can improve results.
- Preventative Measures: Monitoring areas for early signs of invasion and removing young plants before they establish can help limit the spread.



**Ecological Impact** - Salmonberry can have significant ecological impacts, especially in areas where it becomes dominant:

- Competition with Native Species: Forms dense thickets that outcompete native plants, particularly in the understory, leading to reduced biodiversity.
- Impact on Tree Regeneration: Can inhibit the growth of tree seedlings, especially in woodlands where it forms dense cover.
- Alteration of Habitat Structure: The dense growth can change the composition of plant communities, affecting the wildlife that relies on native flora for food and shelter.



**For further information and free advice, please contact:**  
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