



# Black Bryony October 2017



# Think Safe, Act Safe and Be Safe



## Our Safety Vision:

- Our vision of “preventing harm to all” is at the centre of our Safety Strategy and is synonymous with our commitment to resourcing and working safely.
- We believe that our vision can be achieved if we all develop a safe mind-set, plan our tasks correctly and actively seek ways to prevent incidents. We also believe that behaving in a safe way will also lead to zero accidents. We have devised a set of rules that underpins our vision and are consistent with our mantra. **Think safe, act safe and be safe!**



Think Safe, Act Safe and Be Safe



In this edition:

- Poisonous plant caused an injury to off track de-veg worker

**Action required:**

After reading this briefing, you are required to respond, please click **“I have read and understood”** or email [lmillard@resourcing-solutions.com](mailto:lmillard@resourcing-solutions.com) with acknowledgement and any questions/suggestions

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## Poisonous plant on the Infrastructure:

Two off track operatives were carrying out de-veg works when they both came into contact with a '[Black Bryony](#)' plant, which is known to have toxic properties and can cause allergic reactions.

One of the team came out in a particularly bad rash after contact, and was unable to return to work the next day due to the discomfort this caused him.

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## Poisonous plant on the Infrastructure:

*Dioscorea communis* is a species of flowering plant in the yam family Dioscoreaceae and is commonly known as black bryony, lady's-seal, and black bindweed



It is a climbing herbaceous plant growing to 2–4 m tall, with stems that twine clockwise. The leaves are spirally arranged, heart-shaped, up to 10 cm long and 8 cm broad, with a petiole up to 5 cm long.

It is dioecious, with separate male and female plants.

The flowers are individually inconspicuous, greenish-yellow, 3–6 mm diameter, with six petals; the male flowers produced in slender 5–10 cm racemes, the female flowers in shorter clusters. The fruit is a bright red berry, 1 cm diameter. Its fairly large tuber is, like the rest of the plant, poisonous.





## Allergic reaction to an irritant plant during vegetation work

On 30 August a member of Tonbridge Off-Track team was carrying out strimming work in the Chislehurst area (access point road). On Monday 4 September, the team member called Ashford KICC to report that over the weekend around 60 small burns/blisters had appeared on both lower arms and hands. He suspected an allergic reaction to a plant that he was strimming. He suffered discomfort but continued his work duties throughout the week. He treated the blisters with cream and has been advised by SM to visit his GP if the condition gets worse. During the investigation it has been identified that IP had not been wearing long sleeves for the activity on site. This event has been recorded as a No Lost Time accident.



### Immediate learning points:

- Appropriate PPE for the task must be worn
- All staff to be reminded to be vigilant of the possible presence of irritant plants when on or around the railway
- Before commencing any task, staff should carry out a thorough inspection of the site and skin contact in such locations should be avoided

### Cause(s) of the incident

- Not wearing appropriate PPE for the task
- Exposed skin wasn't fully covered during vegetation clearing



# “Think Safe, Act Safe and Be Safe”

## Compliance Team

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