

KUDZU

Pueraria montana var. lobata



Description: Kudzu is a semiwoody, perennial vine that can climb 30-90 feet. The leaves are alternate and compound with 3 unlobed to deeply lobed leaflets that are hairy beneath and up to 4 inches wide. Flowers are purple and pea-like, and they grow from leaf axils in long hanging clusters that bloom in late summer.

Seedpods are brown, flattened, and hairy.



Native range: Across Asia (<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pumo1.htm>)



Ecological threat: This plant threatens forest edges, woodlands, and savannas. Kudzu kills or degrades other plants by smothering them under a solid blanket of leaves, by girdling woody stems and tree trunks, and by breaking branches or uprooting entire trees and shrubs through the sheer force of its weight. Once established, Kudzu plants grow rapidly, extending as much as 60 feet per season at a rate of about one foot per day. (<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pumo1.htm>)

Current North American Range: Kudzu is currently observed throughout Missouri, Illinois and Indiana, southern Iowa and Ohio, and in patches of Michigan.

Current Midwest general distribution, including southern Ontario Not Known Isolated Locally Abundant Widespread

Early Detection and Rapid Response Can Help Stop the Spread!

KUDZU, *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: (<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pumo1.htm>)

For successful long term control of kudzu, the extensive root system must be destroyed. Any remaining root crowns can lead to reinfestation of an area.

Mechanical methods

This involves cutting vines just above ground level and destroying all cut material. Close mowing every month for two growing seasons or repeated cultivation may be effective. Cut kudzu can be fed to livestock, burned or enclosed in plastic bags and sent to a landfill. If conducted in the spring, cutting must be repeated as regrowth appears to exhaust the plant's stored carbohydrate reserves.

Biological methods

Late season cutting should be followed up with immediate application of a systemic herbicide (e.g., glyphosate) to cut stems, to encourage transport of the herbicide into the root system. Repeated applications of several soil-active herbicides have been used effectively on large infestations in forestry situations. Efforts are being organized by the U.S. Forest Service to begin a search for biological control agents for kudzu.

For more information on control and management of this species, please visit the following Web sites: www.usda.plants.gov, www.nps.gov/plants/alien/factmain.htm, tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/control.html

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