

# CHINESE YAM

## *Dioscorea oppositifolia*



**Description:** Chinese Yam is a herbaceous, perennial vine that twines clockwise and can climb up to 15 feet. Leaves are opposite with the upper nodes alternate, and are reddish where the leaf stem joins the leaf. They vary in shape, but are often shield- or heart-shaped. Flowers are small and white, arranged in spikes, and have a cinnamon odor. Reproductive bulbils (small potato-like tubers in leaf axils) are present from June through September.



**Native range:** Throughout China (<http://www.invasive.org/eastern/eppc/DIOP.html>)



**Ecological threat:** This plant threatens stream sides, floodplains, and ravines. It can tolerate semi-xeric sites with rocky soils. It grows in full sun and can tolerate all but the deepest shade.

**Current North American Range:** Chinese Yam is currently observed throughout Indiana and in the southern halves of Missouri, Illinois, and Ohio.

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

**Early Detection and Rapid Response Can Help Stop the Spread!**

# CHINESE YAM, *Dioscorea oppositifolia*

**MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:** (<http://www.invasive.org/eastern/eppc/DIOP.html>)

## **Mechanical Control**

**Mowing/Cutting:** This method is appropriate for small initial populations or environmentally sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used. Mowing or cutting will control the spread of Chinese yam, but will not eradicate it unless it is continued for several growing seasons or until the root reserves are exhausted. Stems should be cut at least once per growing season as close to ground level as possible. Treatment should be completed prior to bulbil production typically in July.

**Grubbing:** This method is appropriate for small initial populations or environmentally sensitive areas where herbicides cannot be used. Using a pulaski or similar digging tool, remove the entire plant, including all roots and bulbils (if present). Juvenile plants can be hand pulled depending on soil conditions and root development. Any portions of the root system not removed will potentially resprout.

**Mulching:** Mulching is an effective control on small infestations or in areas where herbicides cannot be used. Cover the entire infestation with several inches of mulch. This may include wood chips, grass clippings, hay or similar degradable plant material. Shredded or chipped wood may be the best option since hay and grass may potentially carry weed seeds. Covering the area with cardboard may improve the effectiveness and longevity of this method. The mulch should stay in place for at least two growing season and may need to be augmented several times.

## **Herbicidal Control**

**Foliar Spray Method:** Use this method to control large populations. The most effective time to treat plants is after the leaves are fully expanded but before the aerial tubers are ripe.

**Glyphosate:** Apply a 4% solution of glyphosate and water plus 0.5%-1% non-ionic surfactant to thoroughly wet all foliage. Do not apply so heavily that herbicide will drip off leaves. Glyphosate is a non-selective systemic herbicide that may kill non-target partially sprayed plants. Ambient air temperature should be above 65°F.

**Triclopyr:** If native grasses are intermingled with the Chinese yam, triclopyr is preferred since it is selective to broadleaved plants. Apply a 4% solution of triclopyr and water to thoroughly wet all foliage. Do not apply so heavily that herbicide will drip off leaves. A 0.5%-1% non-ionic surfactant is recommended in order to penetrate the leaf cuticle, and ambient air temperature should be above 65°F.

**For more information on control and management of this species, please visit the following Web sites:** [www.usda.plants.gov](http://www.usda.plants.gov), [www.nps.gov/plants/alien/factmain.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/factmain.htm), [tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/control.html](http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/control.html), [dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.htm](http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/plants.htm), [www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/main.shtml](http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/main.shtml), <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pope1.htm>

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