

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: **SERICEA LESPEDEZA**

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Lespedeza cuneata*

FAMILY: *Fabaceae*

ORIGIN: Japan

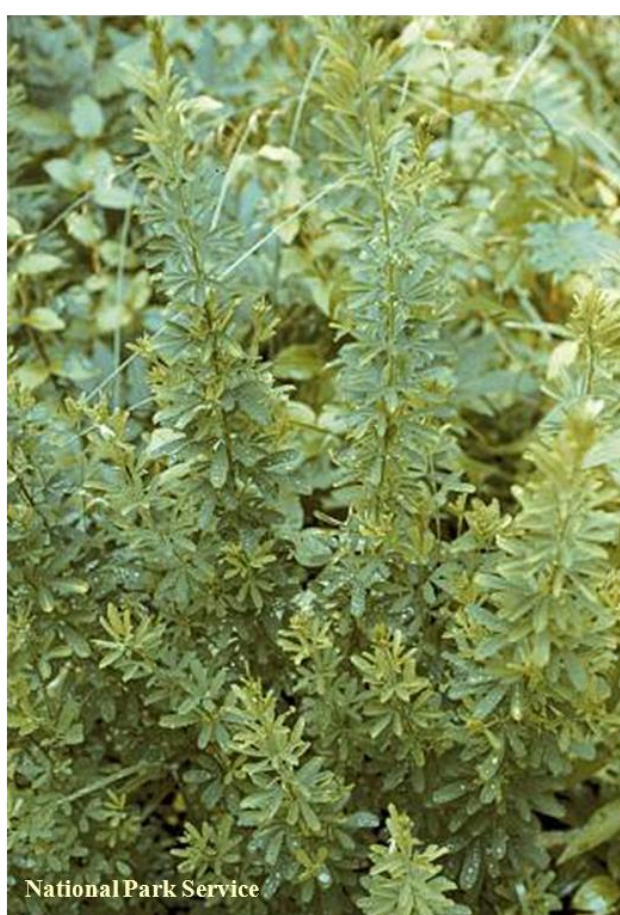
US INTRODUCTION: Introduced in 1899, likely for forage, bank stabilization, and soil improvement

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Animals
- Contaminated hay and soil
- Mowing during seed set

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Perennial, forming dense patches; flowers July-October, spread by seed and vegetatively from root crown
- Flowers solitary or in clusters of 2-3 from base of upper leaves, white to cream with purple streams from the center
- Fruits October to March; fruits flat ovate to round single-seeded legume pod 0.12 to 0.15 inches wide, green becoming tan
- Leaves alternate, divided into three smaller leaflets, which are covered with dense, flattened hairs; leaflets wedge-shaped, narrowest at base, broadening to tip
- Stems and branches grayish-green with stiff hairs
- Threatens open areas of forests, prairie, woodlands, and savannas



Plant



Plant with flower buds



Leaf

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Round-headed bush clover (*L. capitata*) flowers grow in dense clusters at the tip of the stem. Slender bush clover (*L. virginica*), native, flowers purple-pink in crowded clusters, stems brown, grows in tufts (may resemble silky bush clover in shaded conditions). Round-headed bush clover (*L. capitata*) flowers grow in dense clusters at the tip of the stem.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

USDA Plants Database.
<http://plants.usda.gov/java/profile?symbol=LECU>

Plant Conservation Alliance Fact Sheet.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/lecu1.htm>

Bugwood Wiki.
http://wiki.bugwood.org/Lespedeza_cuneata

Non-Native

vs.

Native



Sericea lespedeza flowers along stem



Round-headed bush clover flower cluster at top of stem