

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: **Kudzu**

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*

FAMILY: *Fabaceae*

ORIGIN: Japan and China

US INTRODUCTION: Late 1800's as an ornamental garden plant and for erosion control

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Ornamental garden planting
- Mammals and birds

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Perennial, fast growing, semi-woody, twining or trailing vine with a strong grape fragrance, generally reproduces vegetatively and by seed
- Stems twine to 30 - 90 feet
- Leaves alternate, compound, divided into three broadly ovate leaflets, hairy beneath and on margins; leaflets, 2.5 - 8 inches wide, on short leaf stalks, leaflets may have lobes
- Flowers purple, pea-like, and fragrant, growing from leaf axils in long hanging clusters
- Fruits flat pods 1-3 inches long, 0.3-0.5 inches wide. Pods green, ripening to tan with stiff golden-brown hairs, splitting to release a few ovoid seeds
- Threatens forest edges, old fields, disturbed areas. Tolerates wide range of conditions



Flowers on the vine



Flower close-up



Leaves

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*), native, has abundant roots that grow from climbing vines, leaflets entire or with few irregular pointed (to rounded) teeth, flowers whitish. Hog peanut (*Amphicarpaea bracteata*), native, leaflets smaller, 2 - 8 cm. River grape (*Vitis riparia*), native, leaves three-lobed (not divided into leaflets), leaves sharply pointed. Bur cucumber (*Sicyos angulata*), native, leaves usually three-pointed (not of leaflets), herbaceous stems with tendrils.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Kudzu Fact Sheet – Plant Conservation Alliance.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pumo1.htm>

US Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Library.
<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/kudzu.shtml>

River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area, Illinois Kudzu Eradication Program.
<http://www.rtrcwma.org/kudzu/>



Kudzu in Evanston, Illinois, 2007



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