

Kudzu

Pueraria lobata (Willd.) Ohwi

Leguminosae

Key identifying traits

- ❑ Rapidly growing herbaceous to woody climbing vine with hairy surface on young growth
- ❑ Tap roots are tuberous and mealy in texture
- ❑ Trifoliate leaves are large and coarsely lobed
- ❑ Flowers are reddish-purple with the fragrance of grapes
- ❑ Seeds contained in pea like pods

Biology and ecology

- A deciduous perennial that spreads by seeds and primarily by roots forming at vine nodes
- Can form very dense patches growing up to a foot per day shading and killing other vegetation including trees
- Flowers and seeds rarely found in open patches, generally only on plants that are draped over other plants or objects
- Native to Asia where it has been used for food, forage, fiber and medicinal purposes
- Introduced in 1884 as an ornamental and later as a soil stabilizer with government incentives to plant in the southeastern US where it thrives

Control

Prevention - Learn to identify the plant, avoid unknown vine cuttings and seeds and watch for extremely rapid growth of unknown vines

Biological - Some show promise in the southeast

Cultural - Healthy native plant communities help reduce likelihood of establishment but don't stop it

Mechanical - Repeated digging, cutting, harvesting, and heavy grazing all limit spread and vigor

Chemical - Several effective at label rates; best stage varies by herbicide- use care around desired vegetation and water

Where found - The only known infestation in WA was found in 2001 in Clark County and is being dealt with to eradicate the small isolated start. Three starts found in Oregon.



Photo from Jack Anthony's Kudzu website



Kudzuland
Pueraria montana
Photo by Jeff Schmitt
Copyright 2007 Florida D.E.P.



Kudzu leaves
Pueraria montana
Photo by Ann Murray
Copyright 1999 Univ. Florida



Jack Anthony