

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Japanese Honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica Thunb.



Photo: Chuck Bargeron, U. of Georgia, www.invasive.org

Description:

This evergreen to semi-evergreen woody vine can grow up to 80 feet in length. It has opposite leaves that are typically oval in shape, although the leaves close to the ground may be lobed (see photo below). Fragrant white to yellow flowers appear from the leaf axils between April and July. Small, shiny black fruits develop in the fall.



Photo: Charles Bryson, USDA, www.invasive.org

Background:

Also known as Chinese honeysuckle, this Asian plant was first introduced into Long Island, NY in 1806. It has been planted as an ornamental, for wildlife habitat and for erosion control, especially on farms.

Range:

Japanese honeysuckle is very common on the eastern third of the U.S. from Southern Maine to Florida. Isolated patches can also be found from Texas west to California, in Washington state and Hawaii.



Photo: James Miller & Ted Bodner, Southern Weed Science Society, www.invasive.org

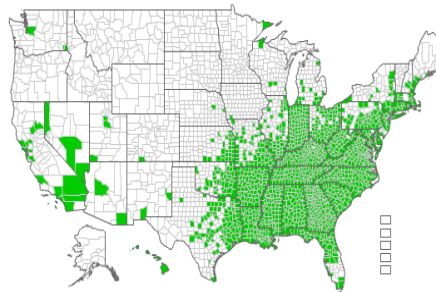


Image courtesy of EDDMapS

Habitat:

This vine can be found in a variety of habitats including forests, wetlands and disturbed habitats like farm fence rows, roadsides and rights-of-way.

Biology and Spread:

This vine spreads both vegetatively through runners and roots as well as by seeds within the black fruits. Birds and other wildlife readily consume the fruits.

Ecological Threat:

The vines can girdle and kill small saplings and form dense mats in tree canopies, shading native vegetation below.

How to Control this Species:

Manual and Mechanical

For small patches, repeated pulling of entire vine and root system may be effective, especially when the soil is moist. Mowing is NOT recommended, as it stimulates growth and leads to denser mats of vegetation.

Prescribed burning will remove the above-ground growth but will not kill the rhizomes, leading to re-sprouts. Grazing by goats has been used in the past but has a similar effect as mowing does, increasing the chance of root sprouts.

Chemical

There are several systemic herbicides that will work on Japanese honeysuckle including glyphosate and triclopyr. Apply a two percent glyphosate or triclopyr and water mix to the vine's leaves from spring through fall (fall is best). A 25 percent solution of herbicide and water can be applied using the cut stump method.

Regardless of the chosen control method, repeated monitoring and sprout removal may be necessary.

References:

Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health:

<http://www.invasive.org/browse/subinfo.cfm?sub=3039>

Invasive Exotic Plant Tutorial for Natural Lands Managers:

http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry/invasivetutorial/Japanese_honeysuckle.htm

USDA Forest Service Weed of the Week:

http://www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/japanese_honeysuckle.pdf

For More Information:

Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, National Park Service:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/midatlantic.pdf>

Invasive Plants Field and Reference Guide, U.S. Forest Service:

http://na.fs.fed.us/pubs/misc/ip/ip_field_guide.pdf

Native Alternatives:

Many native vines can be used in place of Japanese honeysuckle:

Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)



Photo: Theodore Webster, USDA,
www.forestryimages.org

Cross vine (*Bignonia capreolata*)



Photo: Rebekah Wallace, U. of Georgia,
www.forestryimages.org

Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*)



Photo: Charles Bryson, USDA,
www.forestryimages.org