

# KUDZU

## *Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*

### What is kudzu?

Kudzu is a semi-woody perennial vine that is invasive to North America. The vine can trail and climb on a variety of surfaces, including trees, shrubs, ground vegetation, buildings and bare surfaces. Kudzu can grow up to one foot per day, enabling it to quickly engulf large areas.

### Identification

Leaves are compound, consisting of three leaflets that are two to five inches long, and each leaflet may have up to three lobes. Vines have bristly orange hairs and a stem that grows from a central root crown. Clusters of red to purple flowers (occasionally pink or white) bloom in late summer and produce a strong grape-like smell. The fruit consists of flat, brown seed pods approximately two inches long and covered with hairs.



*Kudzu infestation*



*Kudzu vine with hair*



*Kudzu leaf*



Peggy Greb,  
Bugwood.org

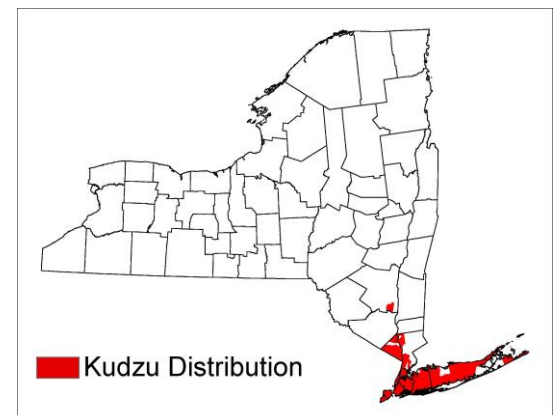
*Kudzu flower*

### Where does it come from?

Kudzu is native to China, Japan and Korea. It was originally brought to the United States in the late 1800s as an example of ornamental Japanese plants to be showcased at fairs and expositions and to provide shade for homesteads. From the early 1900s through the 1940s, it was planted purposefully for erosion control and as feed for livestock.

### Where is kudzu located?

In New York State, kudzu has been found on Long Island, Staten Island, and in the Hudson Valley. It is often found close to where it was originally planted; typically located in open, disturbed areas such as vacant lots, forest edges, right-of-ways, railroads and roadsides.



## Why is kudzu a problem?

Kudzu can...

- Spread very quickly
- Crowd out and physically crush native plants
- Change soil chemistry through nitrogen fixing
- Remove food and habitat for animals that rely on native species
- Cause liability issues by felling trees, power lines and structures under its weight
- Create impenetrable masses of vines that limit access to natural areas
- Affect the economy by reducing forest production and increasing maintenance costs



## What is being done?

DEC Forest Health staff are surveying for kudzu, encouraging the public to identify and report infestations, and controlling known kudzu infestations through a combination of manual and chemical control methods. This three-year pilot program started in 2014 and is funded by the US Forest Service.

### Control

Eradication of kudzu is challenging due to its extensive, difficult to remove root system and its rapid growth, but eradication can be achieved with multiple years of management. Kudzu control methods include: cutting the vines below the root crown, mowing every two to four weeks throughout the growing season for multiple years, grazing by animals (goats, sheep), applying herbicide, and cutting the vines that grow too tall to be reached with herbicide. Caution must be used when disposing of kudzu material because root crowns and stem nodes can reestablish.

### Regulations

Kudzu is listed as a prohibited species in New York State. It is illegal to sell, import, purchase, transport, introduce or propagate this species. Transportation to disposal sites is allowed.

## What can I do?

If you believe you have found kudzu...

- Take a picture of the plant as a whole and close-ups of the leaf, vine and flower (if in bloom).
- Make note of the location (intersecting roads, landmarks or GPS coordinates).
- Contact DEC Forest Health (see below) or your local Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) by visiting [www.nyis.info](http://www.nyis.info).
- Report the infestation to iMapInvasives at [www.NYiMapInvasives.org](http://www.NYiMapInvasives.org).

### CONTACT INFORMATION

#### Forest Health

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