



Photo by Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org

JAPANESE HONEYSUCKLE

LONICERA JAPONICA

Japanese Honeysuckle was introduced into the United States in 1806 as an ornamental selection used for shrub borders, groupings and mass plantings. It is an evergreen, flowering, woody vine that has been favored by many land management professionals and landscapers for decades for its aesthetics, twining habit, and quick establishment. It has also been used in erosion control to help stabilize roadsides and banks and planted as wildlife forage for deer.

Identification

Japanese honeysuckle is an evergreen, woody vine that can be found trailing in forest understories, forest edges and roadsides or found climbing up into forest canopies. Leaves are simple, ovate-oval in shape and arranged oppositely along stems. Spring flowers are fragrant, attractive, and tubular-shaped with delicate, white and yellow petals. Young vines are thin, non-woody, copper colored and covered with fine hairs (pubescent). Stems can grow 80-120 feet long; mature vines can become thick and woody.



Japanese honeysuckle flowers are tubular-shaped with white and yellow petals. (Photo by Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org)

How it spreads

Japanese honeysuckle is abundant in the South Carolina landscape and can be found growing in various habitat conditions, ranging from forest understories to forest floors, to disturbed areas and wetlands.

It is a rapid grower that can quickly out-compete native species for light, space and nutrients, and it is also known to girdle the stems of young saplings. This species is very opportunistic, swiftly establishing in new forest gaps, recently disturbed areas, roadsides and forest edges.

Managing Japanese honeysuckle

Do not plant Japanese honeysuckle. Instead, plant native alternatives, such as Trumpet creeper (*Campsis radicans*), Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), Crossvine (*Bignonia capreolata*), Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*) and several others.

Mechanical control by hand pulling or using hand tools, such as loppers, hand saws, hand pruners, to cut stems can be an effective treatment method, especially if repeated regularly and done when soil is moist.

Chemical control using systemic herbicides for foliar application have been effective for control of Japanese honeysuckle, especially if applied during the growing season and under optimum temperature conditions. Special caution needs to be taken when applying herbicides to the landscape to minimize off target impacts and protect native plants and water quality.

Contact information

To find a forest health worker in your state, visit the Southern Regional Extension Forestry website at <http://southernforesthealth.net/directory>.