

# Kudzu vine

## *Pueraria lobata*

### Family

Fabaceae (pea) family

### Also known as

*Pueraria montana* subspecies *lobata*, kudzu

### Where is it originally from?

Japan

### What does it look like?

Large, semi-woody, trailing or climbing perennial vine (10-30 m long) with large leaves comprising three dark green, slightly lobed leaflets (8-18 x 6-20 cm) with hairy undersides. Tuberous, semi-woody, fibrous roots go to 3 m deep, and stems grow in all directions and root at each node (junction of leaf stalk and stem). Spikes of reddish-purple, pea-like flowers (1-2 cm long) have a grape-like fragrance and are followed by hard oval seeds in flattened, hairy, brown, bean-like pods.

### Are there any similar species?

Mile-a-minute (*Dipogon lignosus*) is a smaller plant than kudzu vine. Its leaflets are 2.5-5.5 cm long and hairless, or only slightly hairy. It has white, pink or purple flowers. Seed pods are boat-shaped (2.5-4.5 cm long) and hairless.

### Why is it weedy?

Grows rapidly (up to 15 m per growing season or up to 30 cm per day) and in a wide range of environmental conditions including acid soils, lime soils, lowlands with high water tables, and over heavy subsoil. Large roots allow plants to survive in fairly dry climates and drought conditions, and it grows in full sun and shade.

### How does it spread?

Spreads by seed but mostly by vegetative growth. Stems root at the nodes (junction of leaf stalk and stem) when in contact with the ground.

### What damage does it do?

In the USA it forms dense infestations covering ground and trees, killing or damaging native plants by smothering them under a solid blanket of leaves, and breaking branches or uprooting trees and shrubs.

### Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Forest, forest edges, riparian zones, scrub, shrubland, plantations, roadsides and urban areas.

### What can I do to get rid of it?

Report any sites found to your regional council.



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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