

Japanese honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica

Description

Competes aggressively below ground for nutrients and above ground for light; has been limited in past by cold winter temperatures but becoming more aggressive in southeastern Michigan; experiences much higher growth rates at higher CO₂ levels than native honeysuckles.

Habit

Perennial, woody vine that can climb up to 7 m (23 ft) tall and form a thick covering over trees, shrubs and groundcover species.

Leaves

Simple, opposite, oval, young leaves often lobed, 4-8 cm (1.5-3 in) long; leaf base round/triangular; leaves are semi-evergreen to evergreen.

Stems

Hairy; reddish/light brown; woody; hollow.

Flowers

White-cream-pink in color, paired, tubular flowers



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UGA2307158



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arising from leaf axils along stems; fade to yellow, fragrant; blooms April through June.

Fruits and Seeds

Fruits are black to purple in color, glossy, paired, producing 4-10 brown-black seeds.

Habitat

Native to East Asia. Found in open woods, old fields, disturbed areas, roadsides and fence rows; moderately shade tolerant but prefers full sun.

Reproduction

By seed and vegetatively by rhizomes.

Similar

Native red honeysuckle (*L. dioica*), yellow honeysuckle (*L. flava*), hairy honeysuckle (*L. hirsuta*), and grape honeysuckle (*L. reticulata*) are similar but native honeysuckle vines have red-orange fruit and terminal, opposite leaves that unite at their bases (connate).

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Monitor open areas and woodland edges. Japanese honeysuckle retains some leaves over winter. Cutting, pulling and burning Japanese honeysuckle may weaken it but will not eliminate it. Foliar herbicide treatment provides effective control. In fire adapted plant communities, late autumn or winter prescribed burns provide effective control when followed by foliar herbicide application about a month after resprouts emerge.

Credits

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