

Chocolate vine

Akebia quinata

Description

First introduced into the United States in 1845 as an ornamental plant.

Habit

Deciduous to evergreen, woody perennial that grows either as a twining vine or a groundcover. Vines are green when young, turning to brown as it ages.

Leaves

Palmately compound with up to 5, 1.5-3 inch long, oval leaflets.

Stems

Slender, green when young and brown with maturity.

Flowers

Small, reddish to purple-brown in color, about 1 inch across and fragrant. Fragrance is said to be that of chocolate. Bloom in mid-Spring.

Fruits and Seeds





Uncommon, large, soft, edible sausage-shaped pods about 2.25 to 4 inches in length, that ripen in late September to early October. Within the pod is a white fleshy core and many black seeds.

Habitat

Native to Central China, Japan and Korea. Found in riparian zones, urban areas and wetlands.

Reproduction

Spreads primarily by vegetative means and can grow 20-40 feet in one growing season. Flowers are monoecious (individual flowers are either male or female, but both sexes can be found on the same plant).

Similar

Several species of Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia* spp.) resemble the *Akebia* genus, but distinguishing features have not been found.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

Small infestations can be controlled with repeated cutting throughout the growing season. Vines may also be dug up, removing as much of the roots as possible. For larger infestations, use of herbicide such as glyphosate or triclopyr. These herbicides can be used at any time of the year as long as air temps are between 50 and 85 degrees F.

Credits

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