
Kudzu

Pueraria montana

Identification:

Climbing perennial vine in the pea family (*Fabaceae*). The alternately arranged leaves are compound in bunches of three leaflets. Leaflets are tomentose, large, and either entire at the margin or 3-lobed. Young shoots are also hairy, and climb vertical surfaces by way of long tendrils. Showy purple flower clusters give way to hairy, beanlike seed pods in fall. One of the most easily recognized invasive plant species in the southeast.

Origin: Japan, China

Habitat:

Grows well in a variety of soil conditions. Invades forest edges, roadsides, abandoned fields, and disturbed areas in full sun. Not tolerant of shade or extreme cold. It will grow much more aggressively in warmer climates in the south, especially where rainfall is abundant.

Ecological Threat:

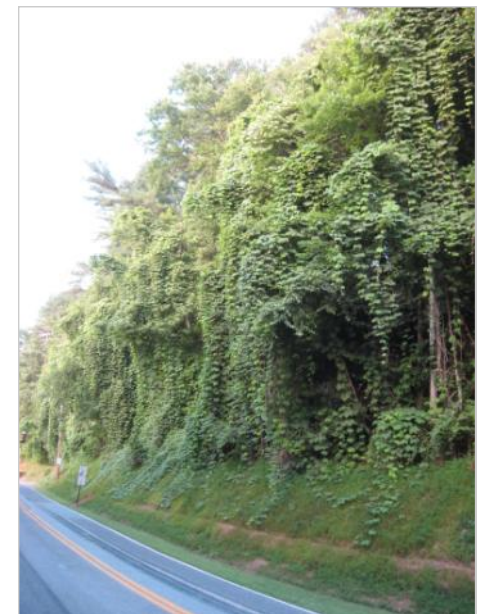
Kudzu is one of the fastest growing invasive plants. It can grow up to one foot per day in ideal conditions. It can cover, smother or girdle open-grown or forest edge trees with its onslaught of growth. All native herbaceous plant life is completely covered and shaded out by kudzu in an infested area. Not as dangerous for high successional forests because of its intolerance to shade, but trees growing along forest edges and in open fields are in danger of being pulled down or shaded out completely.

Native alternatives:

Virginia creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*), pictured below

Partridge pea (*Chamaecrista fasciculata*)

American Wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*)



Developed and published by:

Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition
90 Tennessee Street, Ste. D
P.O. Box 889
Murphy, NC 28906
828-837-5414
www.hrwc.net
