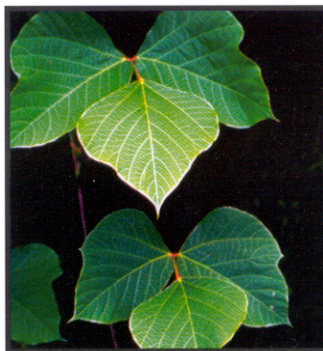


## Kudzu

### *Pueraria montana*



Kudzu-infestation



Kudzu-leaves



Kudzu-flowers

**Plant:** Twining and trailing semi-woody vine, 10-30 m (35-100 ft) long, with rope-like vines covering mature trees and forming dense patches, having 3-leaflet leaves on hairy petioles and stems, deciduous and dying with first frost, yielding fragrant red-purple flowers in mid-summer. and hairy flat capsules with few seeds in fall. Large, semi-woody tuberous roots reaching depths of 1-5 m (3-16 ft).

**Stem:** Round, trailing or climbing by twining on objects less than 10 cm (4 in) in diameter. infrequent branching; young stems yellow-green with dense-erect golden hairs and upward matted silver hairs; aging to rope-like. light gray. and hairless; and eventually rough-barked, rigid, and usually dark-brown, up to 10 cm (4 in) in diameter and larger. Frequent unswollen nodes, rooting at nodes when on ground or buried.

**Leaves:** Alternate. compound with 3-leaflets. Leaflets 8-18 cm (3-7 in) long and 6-20 cm (2 1/2-8 in) wide, usually slightly lobed (or unlobed in

shade), middle leaflet symmetric. 2-lobed; side leaflets 1-lobed. light tan on upper side, tips pointed. Margins hairy with fine golden hairs. Leaf stalks 15-30 cm (6-12 in) long, long-hairy, with swollen bases having two *stipules*.

**Flowers:** June–September. *Axillary* spike-like clusters (*racemes*) 5–30 cm (2–12 in) long. Pea-like flowers with petals lavender to wine-colored. Flowers in pairs (or three's) from raised nodes spiraling up the stalk, opening from the base to top, on bracketed short hairy *pedicels*.

**Fruit and Seeds:** September–January. A dry, flattened leguminous pod (bulging above the seeds), 3–5 cm (1 1/4–2 in) long and 8–10 mm (5/16–3/8 in) wide, tan with stiff golden brown hairs, splitting on 1–2 sides to release a few ovoid seeds. Seeds 3 mm (1/8 in) long, light brown with tan dots, only a small percentage filled or viable.

**Range:** Eastern U.S. in scattered infestations.

**Ecology:** Nitrogen fixer. Vines root at nodes when in contact with the ground (*stoloniferous*) yielding new plants when connecting vine dies. Forms dense mats over the ground, debris, shrubs, and trees. Matted dead leaves persist during winter. Occurs in old infestations, along rights-of-way and stream banks, spreading outward.

