

Sericea Lespedeza

Lespedeza cuneata



Sericea lespedeza—infestation



Sericea lespedeza—leaves



Sericea lespedeza—back & front of leaf

Plant: Ascending to upright perennial herb, legume, 1–2 m (3–6 ft) tall, with leafy slender stems, often branching in the upper half, with crowded whitish flowers toward the terminals.

Leaves: Alternate, crowded and numerous, 3-leaflet leaves, leaflets oblong to linear, 1-2 cm (3/8–3/4 in) long and 3-8 mm (1/8–5/16 in) wide, green above, dense whitish hairy to light gray-green beneath, with a pointed tip. Petioles hairy, lower petioles 5-15 mm (3/16–9/16 in) long and upper leaves without petioles. *Stipules* narrowly linear.

Flowers: July-September. Clusters of 1-3 flowers, shorter than leaves, crowded in upper leaf axils, pea-like, 4-7 mm (3/16–5/16 in) long, white with purple marks (native species have pink-purple flowers). **Calyx** hairy, 5-lobed, 1.2–2.4 mm (1/16–1/8 in) long and shorter than petals.

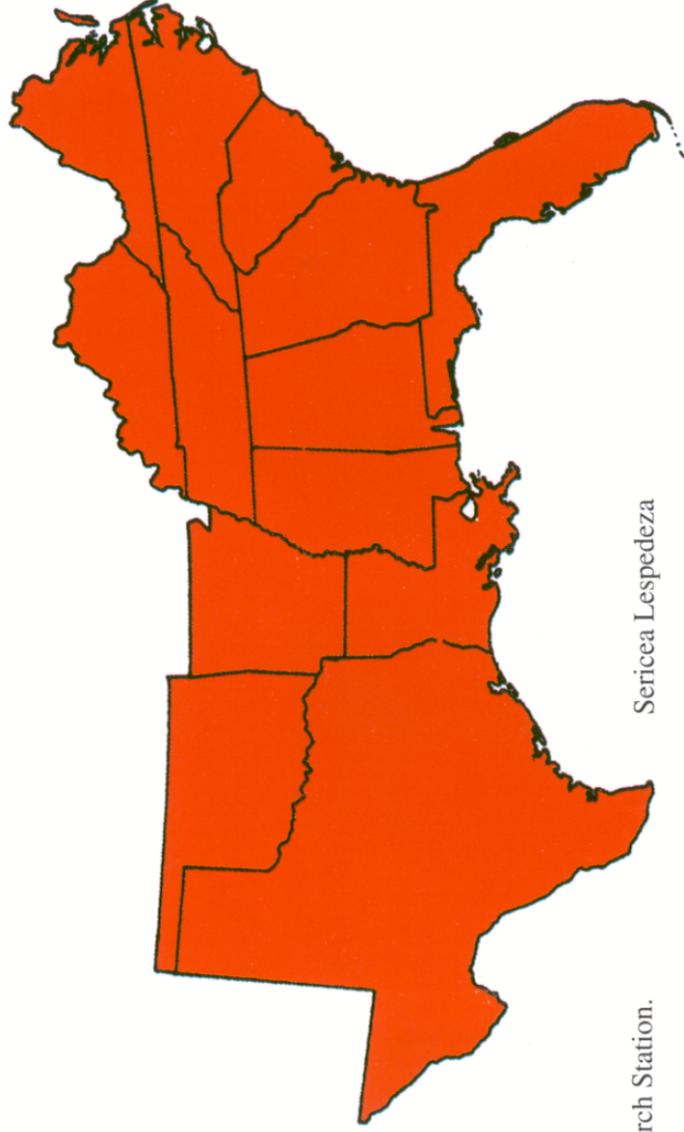
Fruit and Seeds: October-November. One-seeded legume pod (clustered in terminal axils and scattered along the stem), flattened and ovate to rounded, 3–4 mm (1/8–5/32 in) long, hairy on margins

Range: Throughout the Southeast, escaping from plantings.



Sericea Lespedeza—flower

Ecology: Nitrogen fixer. Persists in new and older forest openings, dry upland woodlands to moist savannas, old fields, rights-of-way, and cities. Planted for wildlife food plots and road-cut stabilization, spreads slowly from plantings.



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