



Golden Sands
Resource Conservation
& Development Council, Inc.



Aquatic Invasive Species Quick Guide

Japanese Hops (*Humulus japonicus*)

Description: Japanese hops is an annual, herbaceous vine that can climb to more than ten feet high. The leaves are palmate, have serrated margins, and typically have 5-7 lobes. The stems are rough to the touch and are covered with downward-pointing hairs that help the plant to climb. These also can be very irritating to the skin. Flowers are produced in July and August, with male and female flowers on separate plants. Male flowers are small, green to yellow in color and occur in branched clumps. Female flowers are green, plump and have drooping, cone-like structures.



Japanese hops leaves are similar to common hops, but tend to have at least 5 lobes per leaf.
Photo: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources



Japanese hops has scale-like structures that cover its seeds.

Photo: University of Massachusetts Amherst Extension

North American Distribution: Japanese hops is most common in the Northeastern United States.

Dispersal Vector(s): This plant spreads by seed and germinates in early spring. **Japanese hops can continue to produce plants throughout the season, if moisture and sunlight conditions permit.** Seeds are dispersed by animals, machinery, and flooding. Use as an ornamental plant has also led to unwanted introductions.

Ecological Impact: Japanese hops grows quickly and can quickly spread over the landscape. As it spreads, this plant forms dense mats which cover native shrubs and understory plants, blocking sunlight from reaching them. The vines can also climb trees or shrubs which can cause them to droop or break. Japanese hops is especially problematic in riparian and floodplain habitats where sunlight and moisture are abundant.

Control Options: Japanese hops can be manually removed by digging or pulling the plant before it goes to seed. Caution should be taken when handling the plant, as the hairs can cause skin irritation. Long-sleeved shirts, pants, and gloves should be worn when removing Japanese hops.

Japanese hops can also be removed using herbicides. Glyphosate and triclopyr have been effective. Care should be taken to minimize overspray on nearby desirable plants, and herbicides used on stands of Japanese hops occurring adjacent to waterways must be approved for aquatic use .

There is currently no known biological control for Japanese hops.



Japanese hops can quickly colonize an area, smothering out native vegetation.

Photo: Paul Eriksson

Additional Information:

<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/pubs/midatlantic/huja.htm>

<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives/fact/japanesehops.html>