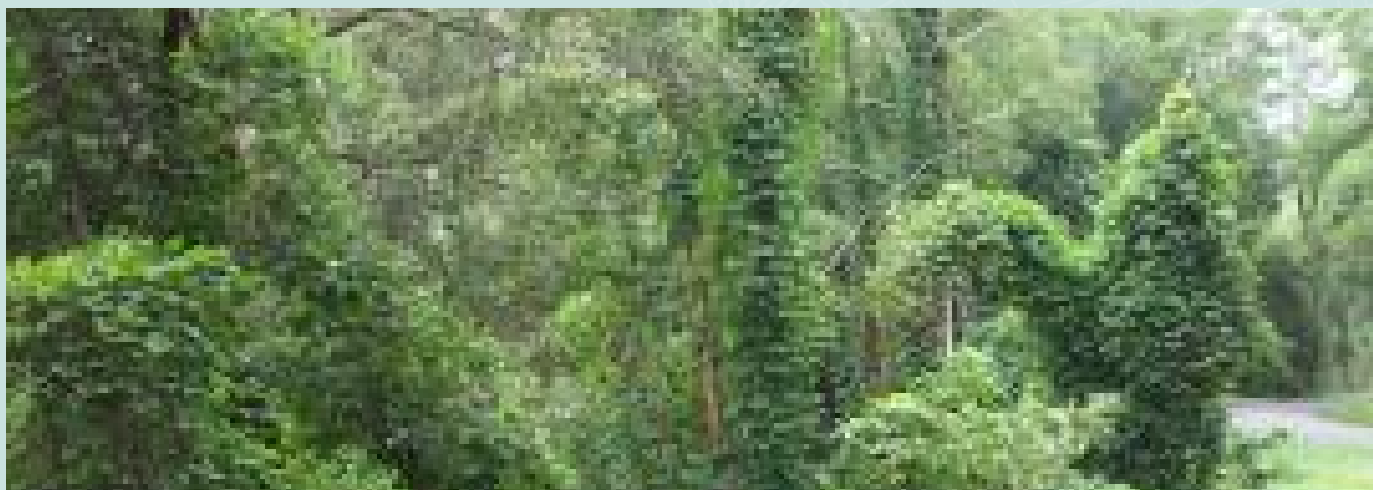


Kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*)

Kudzu is a vine with large leaves that can climb up to 30 m high or form very dense mats over the ground. It grows very quickly smothering and killing plants and damaging infrastructure.



HOW DOES THIS WEED AFFECT YOU?

Kudzu grows very quickly, up to 30 cm per day and it:

- smothers native plants, from ground covers to tall trees
- reduces food and habitat for native animals
- competes with horticultural crops and timber plantations
- restricts human and animal movement
- causes hazards because the dense mats can obscure ditches or drains
- grows over, and damages buildings, overhead wires and other infrastructure.

WHERE IS IT FOUND?

Kudzu has been found in coastal regions of NSW, mostly on the North and Central Coasts.

It is native to south-east China and southern Japan. It may also be native to south-east Asia, Papua New Guinea and other Pacific islands but it is also possible that the plants were introduced to these countries as a food source. It was most likely introduced to Australia as a fodder crop and to limit erosion.



DESCRIPTION

Kudzu is a semi-woody perennial vine. It is deciduous in cool regions and during extended dry periods. Kudzu can climb up trees and over other structures up to 30 m high. It also can form extremely dense mats up to 2 m deep on the ground.

Leaves:

Leaves are alternate along the stem and are made up of three leaflets which are:

- dark green on top and light green to grey-green underneath
- 7–25 cm long and 5–13 cm wide
- usually lobed with 2 or 3 lobes
- oval to diamond shaped, if not lobed
- pointed at the tip
- sparsely hairy.

Flowers are:

- pea-like, arranged in a spike 10–25 cm long
- purple to pink with a yellow spot at the base
- individually 12–18 mm long
- grape-scented
- present in summer.

Seedpods are:

- brown with 3-10 seeds
- 5–9 cm long
- flattened and oblong shaped
- covered with reddish-brown hairs

Seed split on both sides when they release their seeds.

Stems are:

- up to 30 m long and 2.5 cm in diameter for the main stems
- up to 3 m long for secondary branches
- covered in grey to brown hairs.

Roots consist of:

- large edible tubers usually 60–90 cm long, (occasionally up to 1.8 m long) 15 cm in diameter and can weigh up to 180 kg.
- deep roots up to 5 m.

CONTROL

By hand

If there are just a few small plants they can be removed by hand. Dig out the tubers and make sure all parts of the plant are removed and disposed of appropriately.

Disposal

Large amounts of kudzu can be composted on site if they are not in a flood zone. Piles should be checked regularly and any new growth should be treated.

Contact your local council for further advice on how to dispose of this plant.

Grazing

Continual grazing can weaken and kill kudzu. Pigs can dig out and eat the tubers.

Chemical control

Spot spraying

Thoroughly cover all of the foliage with the herbicide mix to the point of runoff.

For areas near waterways and native vegetation, apply herbicide to kudzu plants in full leaf, mid to late spring, followed by a second application in autumn.

In open pastures, apply a single application to kudzu plants in spring or autumn. Allow time for regrowth following grazing.



Source: <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Kudzu>

LOOK A LIKES

- Lima bean (*Phaseolus lunatus*), which is commonly grown for the edible bean seeds.
- Hyacinth bean (*Lablab purpureus*), which is grown for food and has naturalised in NSW.
- Dipogon (*Dipogon lignosus*), an ornamental which has naturalised in NSW.

How does it spread?

Kudzu is mostly spread by people intentionally planting it for ornamental purposes, or for food for people and livestock.

By seed

Kudzu plants start producing seeds after three years. Seed viability is generally low, but occasionally some seeds remain viable for several years. Seeds can be spread by water, contaminated soil or contaminated fodder or mulch.

By plant parts

New plants can grow from stems and tubers and many vines can grow from one tuber. Contaminated soil moved by earth moving equipment can spread the tubers.

what type of environment does it grow in

Kudzu can grow in a wide range of climates including tropical, subtropical and warm temperate regions. It grows best in areas with mild winters, hot summers (over 25°C), and an annual rainfall over 1000 mm. Although it is very sensitive to frost, frost-damaged plants can reshoot from tubers in spring. It can also tolerate dry periods by dropping its leaves.

It grows in many soil types and thrives in deep, loamy, well-drained soils. It does not grow well in waterlogged or highly alkaline soils.

Although kudzu is most vigorous in full sun, it can grow in partial shade. It often grows along waterways and in disturbed areas such as roadsides. In NSW it has also been found in open pastures, sclerophyll forests and subtropical rainforests.

For more info please visit:

<https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Kudzu>

DECLARATION & BIOSECURITY DUTY

Regional priority weed category - Eradication (whole of region): the following weed is present in limited distribution and abundance in some parts of the region. Elimination of the biosecurity risk posed by these weeds is a reasonably practical objective.