

Unwanted Aliens on our Door Step

(12 Non-native Noxious Plants Threatening Texas)



1. Kudzu



2. Cogongrass



3. Japanese Climbing Fern



4. Giant Asian Dodder



5. Nepalese Browntop



6. Climbing Yams



7. Chinese Silvergrass



8. Oriental Bittersweet



9. Tropical Soda Apple



10. Japanese Knotweed



11. Porcelain Berry



12. Multiflora Rose

Detected in Texas (One foot in the door)

Not yet found in Texas

Description of Unwanted Alien Plants on the Door Step of Texas

1. **Kudzu:** *Pueraria montana*. Introduced from Japan and China in the early 1900s for erosion control. Kudzu is a deciduous, twining, mat-forming, ropelike woody vine and may completely cover large trees. Common in several southern states. Stems are covered with dense hairs. Leaves are alternate, compound and contain three leaflets.
2. **Cogongrass:** *Imperata cylindrica*. Introduced from Southeast Asia to the southern U.S. in the early 1900s for forage and erosion control. Cogongrass forms dense, perennial colonies and resembles Johnson grass. This grass prefers full sun; leaf blades tend to be a yellow-green color, and often have off-center midveins.
3. **Japanese Climbing Fern:** *Lygodium japonicum*. Native to Asia and Australia, this fern was brought to the U.S. in the 1930s as an ornamental plant. It is a climbing, twining, mat-forming fern that invades open forests, road edges, and wet areas. Leaves are mostly deciduous, opposite, compound, lacy, and finely divided.
4. **Giant Asian Dodder:** *Cuscuta japonica*. Parasitic plant discovered in several neighborhoods in Houston. Long vines, which resemble spaghetti, may infest a variety of host plants, including hedges and trees, often killing them. Vines are about the diameter of a pencil (larger than those of native dodder).
5. **Nepalese Browntop:** *Microstegium vinimeum*. Introduced from Asia in the early 1900s, this shade-tolerant, sprawling, annual grass has flat, short leaf blades with an off-center midvein; it resembles common crabgrass. Dried, whitish-tan grass remains standing in winter.
6. **Climbing Yams:** *Dioscorea bulbifera* (and others). Native to Africa and Asia and brought to the U.S. prior to 1900 as a possible food source. Twining, sprawling, herbaceous, climbing vines with alternate or opposite heart-shaped leaves that can cover shrubs and trees. Potato-like tubers (1" to 4") form at leaf axils; leaves resemble greenbrier.
7. **Chinese Silvergrass:** *Miscanthus sinensis*. Introduced from Asia and widely sold and planted as an ornamental. Perennial, densely bunched grass, 5-10 feet tall. Blades may be 40" long with the midvein white above and green beneath. Very flammable and can be a fire hazard.
8. **Oriental Bittersweet:** *Celastrus orbiculatus*. A decorative, ornamental plant brought from Asia in 1736, this twining and climbing woody vine is shade tolerant, has alternate, deciduous leaves, and will grow to the top of trees 60 feet tall. Scarlet berries are persistent in the winter and contain two white seeds.
9. **Tropical Soda Apple:** *Solanum viarum*. Native to South America and found in Florida in the 1980s, this plant is an upright, thorny, perennial shrub with large, oak-shaped, velvety, alternate, thorny leaves. Stems also have thorns and the plant bears spherical, mottled, green to yellow fruit about 1½" in diameter.
10. **Japanese Knotweed:** *Polygonum cuspidatum*. Introduced from Asia in the late 1800s for erosion control and as an ornamental, this plant can tolerate almost any site. It is an upright perennial shrub that forms dense thickets. Stems are hollow like bamboo and the alternate, pointed leaves may be 6" long and 5" wide.
11. **Porcelain Berry:** *Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*. Native to China and Russia, this climbing, deciduous, woody vine in the grape family was brought to the U.S. as a landscape plant in the 1870s. Leaves are simple, alternate, dark green, 3-5 lobed, with coarsely toothed edges. Berries mature in the fall and range in color from white to steel blue.
12. **Multiflora Rose:** *Rosa multiflora*. Brought to the U.S. from Japan in the 1860s as rootstock for ornamental roses and later used as living fences and for erosion control. A thorny perennial shrub having alternate compound leaves, showy, fragrant white to pink flowers, and small red fruits that remain on the plant through the winter.

If you detect any of these nonnative invasive plants in Texas, contact Joe Pase, TFS Forest Pest Management in Lufkin (Phone 936-639-8170; e-mail = jpase@tfs.tamu.edu) or Kim Camilli, TFS Forest Pest Management in Austin (Phone: 512-371-7011; e-mail = kcamilli@tfs.tamu.edu). For detailed descriptions and photos, see James H. Miller's publication "Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests" at <http://www.invasive.org/eastern/srs/>.