

NEW INVADERS: STATUS OF SOME NON-NATIVE INVASIVE VINES IN THE MIDWEST.
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Exotic species invasions and their cumulative impacts are having profound environmental consequences on Midwestern natural communities. Exotic plant species threaten every aspect of ecosystem health and productivity on public and private lands. This exotic invasion on the Midwest and its communities is resulting in a gradual loss of biodiversity. Exotic vines are some of the most troublesome invaders because they tend to form the most dense infestations. Invasive vines get established in forest gaps where they can collapse and smother nearby vegetation preventing the natural regeneration process. Often times they are hard to control because of the sheer biomass. Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Chinese yam (*Dioscorea oppositifolia*), kudzu (*Pueraria lobata*), round-leaved bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Japanese Hops (*Humulus japonicus*), Mile-a-minute Weed (*Polygonum perfoliatum*), climbing Euonymus (*Euonymus fortunei*) and Black swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*, syn. *Cynanchum nigrum*) are among some of the invasive exotic vines which pose a serious threat to Midwestern natural communities.

For example, in some parts of the Midwest, Japanese honeysuckle is so wide spread and common in forests that any control effort is generally limited to sensitive communities or rare plant sites. Chinese yam is a highly invasive but little understood deep rooted, herbaceous, perennial vine native to Asia. In the Midwest, Chinese yam is primarily confined to the southern counties. In the Midwest, most of the populations of kudzu are located in the southernmost counties of Missouri, Illinois and Indiana however, populations are scattered in other parts of those states and extend as far north as Chicago. Round-leaved bittersweet is another Asiatic vine which certainly has the characteristics of a highly invasive plant species - high reproductive rate, rapid growth rate, long range dispersal, broad photosynthetic range, and root suckering abilities. Round-leaved bittersweet is scattered in the Midwest and in areas where it is established it is a real problem.

Many of these invasive vines pose resource management challenges. This presentation will touch on key identification features; distribution; life history, ecological significance; and notes on control for the invasive vines mentioned above.

