

Japanese honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica

Fact Sheet

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Common Name: Japanese honeysuckle

New Hampshire Invasive Species Status: Prohibited (Agr 3800)

Latin Name: *Lonicera japonica*

Native to: Eurasia



Leaves-opposite (summer)



Japanese honeysuckle – Rye, NH



Leaf (summer)



Flowers (spring)



Berries (summer)



Berries (fall)



Thicket (spring)



Vines (summer)



Fall foliage (Autumn)

Description: Climbing vine. **Stems/vines:** Reddish-brown, pubescent. **Leaves:** Opposite and not clasping the stem as opposed to the three native honeysuckle vines that do clasp the stem, oblong, 1½-2" long, rounded at base. **Flowers:** Tubular, white or yellow, fragrant, May to mid-July. **Fruit:** Berry, smooth, blackish to slightly purplish. **Zone:** 4-8. **Habitat:** Prefers moist soils and full sun to partial shade. **Spread:** Seeds spread by wildlife. **Comments:** Vines grow quickly, covering native vegetation, resulting in loss of habitat. **Controls:** hand or mechanical removal, cutting, girdling, chemical.

General Considerations

Japanese honeysuckle is a trailing or twining, perennial woody vine that can grow to 30' (9 m) in length. The young stems are hairy, while the old stems can be glabrous and hollow ranging from 1/8" to as large as 2" (3.17mm-5cm) in diameter. Bark is somewhat corky and peels easily on older stems. The leaves are opposite, dark green and glabrous above and slightly pubescent beneath. They are usually ovate with entire margins, but young leaves can be lobed.

Rooting depth is generally 6" to 12" (15-30 cm) on moist sites, and up to 40" (102 cm) on dry sites. Roots may extend laterally to 8' (2.4 m) from the crown. Japanese honeysuckle often retains its leaves into winter, with abscission sometimes occurring after new leaves have fully developed in spring.

The flowers of Japanese honeysuckle are white or pinkish and fade to yellow as they age. They are borne in axillary pairs on solitary peduncles. The berries are black or dark purple and about $\frac{3}{16}$ " to $\frac{1}{4}$ " (6-7 mm) in diameter. Within the berries are 2-5 blackish ovate seeds. One side of the seed is ridged, while the other is flat.

Germination generally occurs the following spring for most seeds and because they are small and contain limited stored carbohydrates, seedlings must begin photosynthesis immediately. It is possible for some seeds to survive into the second year, but this seems to be a rare occurrence. Therefore, seed bank development tends to be a minor concern.

Japanese honeysuckle can create extremely dense thickets as its vines intertwine and overlap in an effort to absorb as much available light as possible. By doing so, Japanese honeysuckle robs light, nutrients and moisture that would otherwise be available for the growth of native species. The sheer weight of Japanese honeysuckle vines that overtop native trees and shrubs can break branches and even topple whole trees.

Control Options

See the following control guides: [Integrated Pest Management \(IPM\) for Woody Plants](#) or the [Control of Invasive Species by Numbers](#)

<i>Lonicera japonica</i> Japanese honeysuckle	
Plant Type	Vine
Habitat Type	Forests, field edges, roadsides
USDA Hardiness Zone	4-8
Rooting Structure	Deep and fibrous
Environmental Impacts	Dense concentrations of Japanese honeysuckle can inhibit regeneration of woody forest species.
Wildlife Impacts	Degradation of habitat
Leaf arrangement	Opposite
NWI Ranking	UPL
Soil Type	Adaptable to a variety of site conditions
Soil pH Range	6.1-7.8
Light Requirements	Shade tolerant
Growing Season	
Growth Rate	30 feet (9 m) of stem per year
Mature Height	30' (9 m) in length
Life Span	?
Reproductive Age	3-5 years
Flowering Period	Late May to early June
Flower Type	Both monoecious and Dioecious
Pollination	Insects and hummingbirds
Seed Set	September
Seed Per Plant	Prodigious
Scarification Required	Yes
Cold Stratification	Yes
Seed Longevity	Unknown
Seed Germination Rate	-80%
Seedling Density	?
Other Propagules	Suckering and layering
Dispersal Vectors	Frugivorous birds and small mammals

Sources

Invasive Plant Atlas of New England:

http://www.eddmaps.org/ipane/ipanespecies/vines/Lonicera_japonica.htm

USDA Forest Service invasive species website:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/vine/lonjap/all.html>

Invasives.org:

<http://www.invasive.org/browse/subinfo.cfm?sub=3039>