

KUDZU VINE

[*Pueraria montana* (Lour.) Merr. var. *lobata*
(Willd.) Maesen & Almeida;
P. lobata (Willd.) Ohwi.]
PUMOL



UGA0016124

Habit: Perennial, twining vine² that trails or climbs to 30 m (98 ft);^{10,5,19} legume (with nitrogen-fixing bacteria).⁹

Reproduction: Tubers, root suckers,¹⁵ and runners that root at the nodes;^{8,15} by seed;^{8,10,5} successful seed production rare in cold climates;^{19,16} stem cutting propagation not successful.¹⁶

Leaves: Alternate, trifoliate, up to 18 cm (7-8 in) long with long petioles; dark green and a pubescent underside; leaflets with smooth or lobed margin; middle leaflet usually with three lobes and equal base; side leaves 1-2 lobes and unequal bases.^{19,10,5}

Stems: Up to 2.5 cm (1 in) diameter (some 10 cm (4 in));¹⁵ brownish; young stems with tan/bronze hairs;^{10,19,5,15} may grow 30 cm (12 in)/day; die back in fall/winter;¹⁵ some overwinter.²⁸

Flowers: In leaf axils in elongate, branching racemes to 20 cm (8 in) long; up to 2.5 cm (1 in) wide; papilionaceous, reddish-purple, upper petal base yellow;^{4,15} grape-scented odor;^{10,19,5,15} May-November on vertically growing plants⁸ in direct sunlight.¹⁵

KUDZU VINE



UGA2307164



UGA2307165

Pueraria montana (Lour.) Merr. var. *lobata* (Willd.)
Maesen & Almeida

Fruits/Seeds: Early/late fall; flat, pubescent pod 4-5 cm (1½-2 in) long;^{10,15} seeds kidney shaped, 3-4 mm (¼-⅜ in);³⁰ germination at 15-35°C (59-95°F), in light or darkness, and best after scarification²⁴ (mechanical²⁷ or sulfuric acid²⁵); cold stratification not required;²⁵ mammal and bird dispersed.⁸

Habitat: Native to China, E. Asia;^{11,19} introduced into the U.S. in late 1800s;¹¹ forest edges, roadsides, old fields, and disturbed areas; shade intolerant,² but found in forests;^{6,7} not tolerant of cold;³ tolerant of compacted, nutrient-poor soils,²⁶ though P is limiting;¹⁴ older plants with deep roots are more drought tolerant;²³ positive growth response to increasing CO₂.²¹

Comments: Uses include erosion control,^{19,15} feed,^{14,4} fiber,²⁹ ornamental,¹¹ starch,¹ and treatment for alcoholism,^{18,13} colds, asthma, diarrhea, fever, and anemia;²³ used to improve soil in South American humid tropics;²⁰ high genetic diversity in the U.S.;¹⁷ continental U.S. has this variety; *P. montana* var. *chinensis* is in Hawaii; variety hybridization occurs;¹² isoprene emission possible ozone source;²² shading reduces root growth.⁹

Similar Native Species: *Dioclea multiflora*; fruit 2-winged along upper suture; flower smaller.¹⁰