

Japanese Honeysuckle

VINES



May

T. Bodner



October

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November



May



September

Lonicera japonica Thunb. LOJA

Plant. Semievergreen to evergreen woody vine, high climbing and trailing to 80 feet (24 m) long, branching and often forming arbors in forest canopies and/or ground cover under canopies and forming long woody rhizomes that sprout frequently.

Stem. Slender woody vine becoming stout to 2 inches (5 cm) in diameter, with cross section round and opposite branching. Brown and hairy becoming tan barked, fissured, and sloughing with age. Rooting at low nodes.

Leaves. Opposite, broadly ovate to elliptic to oblong, base rounded, tips blunt-pointed to round. Length 1.6 to 2.6 inches (4 to 6.5 cm) and width 0.8 to 1.5 inches (2 to 4 cm). Margins entire but often lobed in early spring. Both surfaces smooth to rough hairy, with undersurface appearing whitish.

Flowers. April to August. Axillary pairs, each 0.8 to 1.2 inches (2 to 3 cm) long, on a bracted stalk. White (or pink) and pale yellow. Fragrant. Thin tubular flaring into five lobes in two lips (upper lip four-lobed and lower lip single-lobed), with the longest lobes roughly equal to the tube. Five stamens and one pistil, all projecting outward and becoming curved. Persistent sepals.

Fruit and seeds. June to March. Nearly spherical, green ripening to black, glossy berry 0.2 inch (5 to 6 mm) on stalks 0.4 to 1.2 inches (1 to 3 cm) long. Two to three seeds.

Ecology. Most commonly occurring invasive plant, overwhelming and replacing native flora in all forest types over a wide range of sites. Occurs as dense infestations along forest margins and right-of-ways as well as under dense canopies and as arbors high in canopies. Shade tolerant. Persists by large woody rootstocks and spreads by rooting at vine nodes and animal-dispersed seeds.

Resembles yellow jessamine, *Gelsemium sempervirens* (L.) St. Hil., which has thinner leaves and hairless stems. **Also resembles** native honeysuckles, *Lonicera* spp., that usually have reddish hairless stems and hairless leaves and do not form extensive infestations.

History and use. Introduced from Japan in the early 1800s. Traditional ornamental, valued as deer browse, with some value for erosion control. Still planted in wildlife food plots.

States with suspected infestations are shown in gray.

**Japanese Honeysuckle****3101**