

# Nonnative Wisterias

VINES



May

T. Bodner



September

T. Bodner



May

Chinese wisteria shown in images



March

T. Bodner

**Chinese wisteria, *Wisteria sinensis* (Sims) DC. WISI**  
**Japanese wisteria, *W. floribunda* (Willd.) DC. WIFL**

**Plant.** Deciduous high climbing, twining, or trailing leguminous woody vines (or cultured as shrubs) to 70 feet (20 m) long. Chinese and Japanese wisteria difficult to distinguish due to possible hybridization.

**Stem.** Woody vines to 10 inches (25 cm) in diameter with infrequent alternate branching. Twigs densely short hairy. Older bark of Chinese wisteria tight and dark gray with light dots (lenticels) compared to white bark of Japanese wisteria.

**Leaves.** Alternate, odd pinnately compound 4 to 16 inches (10 to 40 cm) long, with 7 to 13 leaflets (Chinese) or 13 to 19 leaflets (Japanese), and stalks with swollen bases. Leaflets oval to elliptic with tapering pointed tips 1.6 to 3 inches (4 to 8 cm) long and 1 to 1.4 inches (2.5 to 3.5 cm) wide. Hairless to short hairy at maturity but densely silky hairy when young. Margins entire and wavy. Sessile or short petioled.

**Flowers.** March to May. Dangling and showy, stalked clusters (racemes) appearing when leaves emerge, 4 to 20 inches (10 to 50 cm) long and 3 to 3.5 inches (7 to 9 cm) wide. All blooming at about the same time (Chinese) or gradually from base (Japanese). Pealike flowers, corolla lavender to violet (to pink to white). Fragrant.

**Fruit and seeds.** July to November. Flattened legume pod, irregularly oblong to oblanceolate, 2.5 to 6 inches (6 to 15 cm) long and 0.8 to 1.2 inches (2 to 3 cm) wide. Velvety hairy, greenish brown to golden, splitting on two sides to release one to eight flat round brown seeds, each 0.5 to 1 inch (1.2 to 2.5 cm) in diameter.

**Ecology.** Form dense infestations where previously planted. Occur on wet to dry sites. Colonize by vines twining and covering shrubs and trees and by runners rooting at nodes when vines covered by leaf litter. Seeds water-dispersed along riparian areas. Large seed size a deterrent to animal dispersal.

**Resemble** native or naturalized American wisteria, *W. frutescens* (L.) Poir., which does not form extensive infestations, occurs in wet forests, flowers in June to August after leaves developed, and has 6-inch (15-cm) flower clusters, 9 to 15 leaflets, hairless pods, and slender old vines. **Also may resemble** trumpet creeper, *Campsis radicans* (L.) Seem. ex Bureau, which has leaflets with coarsely toothed margins.

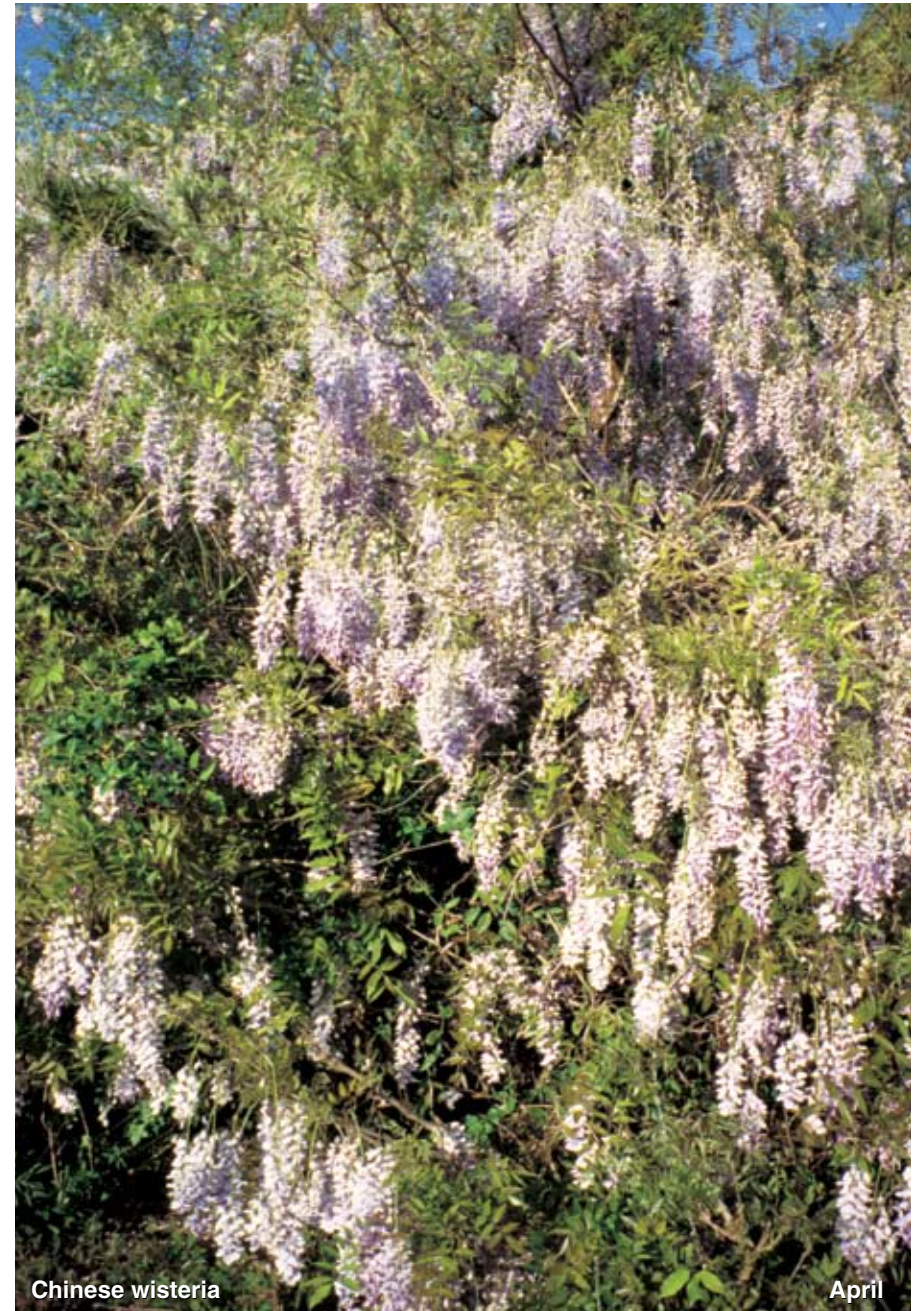
**History and use.** Introduced from Asia in the early 1800s. Traditional southern porch vines.

States with suspected  
infestations are  
shown in gray.



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Chinese wisteria

April