

Japanese honeysuckle

Lonicera japonica

Family Caprifoliaceae



Identification

- Ground vine or climber.
- In cold areas it loses its leaves over winter.
- Stems are purplish and covered in fine hairs.
- Leaves (2.5 to 12 cm long) are arranged opposite to each other along the stem.
- Leaves in spring can be lobed, later becoming more oval in outline.
- The cream-coloured flowers are tubular and sweet-scented.



Japanese honeysuckle. Photo: K. McCombs.



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Where is it found?

Japanese honeysuckle will grow in a range of situations from disturbed forest, along stream banks, forest margins, coastal areas, wetland margins and is commonly found in private gardens.

Why is it a problem?

Fast-growing Japanese honeysuckle climbs up and smothers the vegetation growing beneath it. In some cases it can cause the canopy to collapse. Seed can be dispersed by birds further afield where it may be difficult to control. It can also be spread when included in dumped garden weed waste as broken stem fragments and roots can re-sprout.

Status

Japanese honeysuckle has been declared an unwanted organism under the Biosecurity Act, 1993 which makes it illegal to knowingly release, spread, display or sell, breed, propagate or otherwise distribute plants or part thereof.

Control

To control, where possible, dig out plants or else apply an appropriate herbicide. The best method of control depends on the situation the plant is growing in. Use all herbicides in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and ensure no herbicide comes into contact with other plants, the soil or waterways.



Japanese honeysuckle seedlings. Photo: K. McCombs.