

KUDZU



DESCRIPTION

Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata* (Willd.) Maesen & S.M. Almeida ex Sanjapp & Predeep) is a long-lived, semi-woody vine with long runners that can cover the ground and climbing stems that can grow to 100 feet long and envelop nearby shrubs and trees. The long runners root at the nodes to form new plants. Older stems have a rough, bark-like covering, and young stems bear abundant, spreading brown hairs. The leaves are alternate and compound with three leaflets; lower leaf surfaces are sparsely hairy while upper leaf surfaces are mostly hairless. Each leaflet is broadly ovate to triangular, two to ten inches long and up to six inches wide, entire or two to three-lobed, and abruptly taper to a pointed tip. Showy, fragrant lavender to purple or reddish flowers up to one-half inch long are borne in short, dense racemes. Seed production is infrequent because of sparse blooming. The seed pods are one-and-a-half to three inches long, papery and densely covered with fine brown hairs. Seeds are reddish-brown and hairy. Flowering and fruiting occur from August until October.

PREVENTION OF SPREAD

The Kansas Noxious Weed Law (K.S.A. 2-1313a et. seq.) requires all landowners to control the spread of and to eradicate kudzu on all lands owned or supervised by them. Methods used for control must both prevent the production of viable seed and destroy the plant's ability to reproduce by vegetative means. Infestation sites must be monitored after control methods have been implemented to ensure that dormant seeds in the seedbank do not germinate and establish new infestations.

KUDZU CONTROL PRACTICES

Kudzu control means that both the roots and the flowers must be destroyed. Because kudzu is a perennial, two or more of the control methods discussed herein must be used together to control kudzu, with the exception that herbicide applications may be used alone as a control.

Cultural Control

Cultural weed control involves land and vegetation management techniques used to prevent the establishment or control the spread of noxious weeds.

Grazing by sheep, goats, or especially cattle may be used throughout the growing season to control kudzu. Repeat grazing each year to suppress the plant.

Frequent surveys of fence lines, roadways, ditches, and other susceptible areas for new infestations and the timely removal of any new plants will prevent kudzu from becoming established.

Mechanical Control

Mechanical weed control involves the physical removal of weeds or the reproductive parts of weeds.

As a perennial species, kudzu is difficult to control mechanically. The only option for controlling kudzu mechanically would be to physically dig out the root crown and all vines in contact with the soil, as these will re-sprout new plants. In larger, well-established infestation sites, this would be physically difficult and potentially hazardous. If an area of infestation is cleared, care must be taken to replant desirable species to prevent erosion and provide competition against re-infestation.

Chemical Control

The herbicides listed below may be used for cost-share with landowners to control kudzu. Other products labeled and registered for use on this noxious weed in Kansas may be used in accordance with label directions but are not available for cost-share. Be sure to follow all label directions and precautions. For additional information, consult the most recent edition of the Kansas State University publication of "Chemical Weed Control for Field Crops, Pastures, Rangeland, and Noncropland."

Any two or more of the herbicides listed below may be available for cost-share as a pre-mix or a tank mix if allowed on the respective labels. Contact your county weed program for availability.

Switching often between herbicides with different modes of action is highly recommended.

Herbicide	Mode of Action
aminopyralid	4
dicamba	4
glyphosate	9
tebuthiuron	7
triclopyr	4

Biological Control

Biological control refers to the deliberate application of a living organism to control the spread of weeds. These agents will not eradicate their host plant; therefore, other control methods must be used in addition to the use of biological control agents as part of an integrated pest management strategy. The importation of biological control agents is regulated by USDA-APHIS and is allowed by permit only.

There are no biological control agents available for kudzu.

Sources: Kansas Department of Agriculture K.A.R. 4-8-37, Revised May 20, 2020
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