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# JAPANESE HONEYSUCKLE

## QUICK FACTS

- Native to East Asia
- Twining, woody vine
- Leaves opposite, oval, with simple margins
- Spring flowers white or pink and fading to yellow, sweet-smelling
- Birds eat and spread black berries
- Overgrows or girdles native species
- Has similarities to native Trumpet honeysuckle

Japanese honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica*, is a twining vine native to East Asia, including Japan and Korea. The vine is best known for sweet-scented white or pink tubular flowers that fade to yellow over time and have sweet tasting nectar. These flowers bloom in late spring and produce a black fruit that birds feed on, spreading the seed to new locations. Japanese honeysuckle leaves are oval with smooth edges growing oppositely along the stem and may remain on the vine year-round during mild winters. Occasionally, young leaves will be lobed and look similar to white oak.

Introduced in 1806 in Long Island New York, Japanese honeysuckle was marketed as an ornamental vine that would benefit wildlife and erosion control. The vines are now prevalent on roadsides, field edges, floodplains, disturbed woods and forest openings throughout eastern USA. Although Japanese honeysuckle has some wildlife benefit, these invasive vines can overgrow and girdle small trees and shrubs. They have the ability to form a monoculture where established and reduce the variety of food and shelter available to native wildlife.

A good method for managing Japanese honeysuckle is to cut the vines off of trees or shrubs to prevent girdling. Small vines can be hand-pulled, but any root fragments left in the soil will regrow. As Japanese honeysuckle tends to retain its leaves year round, foliar herbicide can be used on larger infestations while native plants are dormant.

In the Eastern US, Trumpet honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*, a native honeysuckle, can be mistaken for Japanese honeysuckle. Trumpet honeysuckle, has similar twining vines and opposite leaves, but has bright red fruit and terminal red flowers. The native vine also has a pair of fused leaves just below the terminal flower or fruit clusters. It is a good native alternative for ornamental plantings when replacing Japanese honeysuckle.



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