

CHINESE YAM

Dioscorea oppositifolia



University of Georgia

Mature Height	Up to 16 feet on trees or shrubs	Soil Type	Any soil type
Mature Spread	Vines to 16 feet long	Flower Color	Greenish
Mature Form	Vining	Foliage Color	Green
Growth Rate	Rapid	Fall Color	Brown stems after frost
Sun Exposure	Full sun to full shade		
Soil Moisture	Prefers moist		

An aggressive, non-woody, deciduous perennial vine that can overtake acres of vegetation, similar to kudzu, climbing over shrubs and trees. Leaves are heart-shaped, with pointed tip and two lobes near the base of the leaf. New growth often has a reddish coloration at the base of the leaves. Stems are round, slender, twining; plants usually die back to ground and resprout in spring. Flowers tiny, white to greenish-yellow, with scent of cinnamon. Male and female flowers are formed on separate plants, and female plants have not been observed in the wild in our country. Chinese yam becomes established in moist bottomland forests, along stream banks, drainages and roadsides, along fencerows and at old home sites. Forms small bulbils (like little potatoes) in the axils of the leaves. New vines quickly sprout from these bulbils, which drop off the vine and are carried to new locations by water or rodents or in topsoil moved for construction purposes. Escapes from cultivation and aggressively smothers native plants. Continuous mowing will control and if done for several years may kill it. A systemic herbicide such as glyphosate or triclopyr will kill it. Do the foliar spray before the bulbils form but after leaves are well formed.



Photos from
University of Georgia

Photo at right shows the Bulbils



This fact sheet was developed by the West Central Indiana Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) with funding by the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust. The CWMA consists of 27 western and central Indiana counties and strives to help land users identify and control invasive terrestrial plants through workshops, field days and other educational activities.

