

JAPANESE CLIMBING FERN

LYGODIUM JAPONICUM

Japanese climbing fern, *Lygodium japonicum*, is a perennial viney fern that is native to Asia. It's filigree-like foliage attracts gardeners who have planted it as an ornamental, but it can be devastating to our forests! It can survive in low light, climbing up shrubs and trees. In the winter the dried out foliage can serve as a ladder fuel, moving ground fires to the crowns of trees.

Identification

The leaves are opposite on the vine, generally triangular in overall shape, but divided to varying degrees, some leaves elaborately so. The vine is narrow but tough.

How it spreads

Underground rhizomes may be moved on equipment. The fern produces thousands of spores that can be transferred on the wind, hikers shoes or equipment. The vines use trees or understory shrubs to increase their height and optimize the dispersal of their spores.

Managing Japanese climbing fern

Don't plant Japanese climbing fern! We have plenty of beautiful native ferns that are just as pleasing, including a native species of *Lygodium* that is found in the upstate around waterfalls. If you do find Japanese climbing fern, treat green foliage with herbicide in the spring, or pull up the rhizomes as you find them, if it is a small infestation. Be sure to wash any equipment that has been exposed to Japanese climbing fern.

Contact information

If you think you know of a Japanese climbing fern infestation, contact David Jenkins at the SC Forestry Commission at djenkins@scfc.gov or contact the Clemson Invasive Species Program at <https://www.clemson.edu/public/regulatory/plant-protection/invasive/>.

For information on how you can combat invasive plants in your community visit the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant website at <https://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/> or send an email to southcarolinaeppc@gmail.com.



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