

## Chinese Lespedeza



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Chinese lespedeza or sericea [*Lespedeza cuneata* (Dum. Cours.) G. Don] is a semiwoody upright leguminous forb to 6 feet (2 m) in height with many three-leaflet leaves feathered along erect slender whitish stems that often branch in the upper half. Many tiny cream-colored flowers in leaf axils during summer yield abundant single flat seeds in fall and winter. Plants remain standing dormant most of the winter and form dense stands that prevent forest regeneration and land access. Seed have low germination but are long lived in the soil seed bank and require long-term monitoring after control treatments. Seed spread by birds, ants, and rodents. Resembles native lespedeza [*L. virginica* (L.) Britton] which grows in tufted clumps instead of infestations, has crowded clusters of pink-purple to violet flowers, somewhat larger leaflets 0.6 to 1.2 inches (1.5 to 3 cm) long, and brown stems. Also resembles roundhead lespedeza (*L. capitata* Michx.), which has similar leaves but whitish flowers in round-topped clusters.

### Management strategies:

- Do not plant. Remove prior plantings, and control sprouts and seedlings. Bag and dispose of fruit in a dumpster or burn.
- Pull, cut, and treat when seed are not present.
- Minimize disturbance within miles of where this plant occurs, and anticipate wider occupation when plants are present before disturbance.
- Manually pull when soil is moist to ensure removal of all roots.
- Prescribed burning can promote spread of the infestation margins and mowing will increase stem density and canopy cover.
- Suppressing can be accomplished by fertilization of nutrient poor soils.
- Sparingly eaten by most livestock when the plant is young and by goats when the plant is mature, while special varieties have been bred for livestock consumption.

### Recommended control procedures:

- Thoroughly wet all leaves with one of the following herbicides in water with a surfactant (July to September): Garlon 4 as a 2-percent solution (8 ounces per 3-gallon mix), Escort XP\* at three-fourths of an ounce per acre (0.2 dry ounce per 3-gallon mix), Transline\* † as a 0.25-percent solution (1 ounce per 3-gallon mix), a glyphosate herbicide as a 2-percent solution (8 ounces per 3-gallon mix), or Velpar L\* as a 2-percent solution (8 ounces per 3-gallon mix).
- Mowing 1 to 3 months before herbicide applications can assist control.

\* Nontarget plants may be killed or injured by root uptake.

† Transline controls a narrow spectrum of plant species.