

Alabama National Forests

Invasive Species to Watch Out For



Chris Evans, University of Illinois, Bugwood.org

Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*)

- Appearance:** A perennial, colony-forming grass that can grow up to 6 ft tall.
- Foliage:** Leaves have an off-center, whitish midline vein and finely serrated margins. Leaves are up to 6 ft. long, 0.5-0.75 in. wide, stiff, and have a sharp, pointed tip. Rhizomes (creeping rootstalks) are whitish, branched, scaly and sharp at the tips.
- Flowering Head:** Long, silvery-white and cylindrical.
- Fruit/Seeds:** Fluffy, white, plume-like seed heads that disperse like dandelion seeds

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Kudzu (*Pueraria montana* var. *lobata*)

- Appearance:** A climbing, deciduous vine capable of reaching lengths of over 100 ft. in a single season.
- Foliage:** Leaves are alternate on the stem, compound (with three, usually lobed, leaflets), hairy underneath and up to 5.4 in. long.
- Flowering Head:** Flowers are 0.5 in. long, purple, that are fragrant and hang in clusters up to 8 in. long, emerging from where the leaves meet the stem.
- Fruit/Seeds:** Brown, hairy, flat, 3 in. long, 0.3 in. wide seed pods with flat round seeds inside.

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Alligatorweed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*)

- Appearance:** A rooted floating plant or growing along shores or frequently wet areas throughout the southern portions of the United States. It is spread by rhizomes (creeping rootstalks).
- Foliage:** Opposite on stem, elliptical leaves are thick and up to 4 in. long and form a thick sheath around the stem. Stems are hollow and the plant will root at thickened nodes.
- Flowering Heads:** White, occuring in rounded cluster heads 0.5 in. across, emerging from where the leaves meet the stem.
- Fruit/Seeds:** Very small, inconspicuous, and single-seeded.

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Shrubby lespedeza (*Lespedeza bicolor*)






- Appearance:** An upright, deciduous semi-woody forb, 3-10 ft. tall with many slender stems and arching branches.
- Foliage:** Leaves are elliptical, alternate on stem, abundant with three oval leaflets. Leaflets are up to 2 in. long with the lower surface lighter than the upper surface.
- Flowering Heads:** Flowers are 0.5 in. long purple, pea-like flowers develop in clusters that are up to 5 in. long.
- Fruit/Seeds:** The fruit are flat pods that contain one seed and measure up to 0.31 in. long.

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