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To All Media

For Immediate Release

The vine that ate the south is here!

Dreaded invasive kudzu vine has been found in Ontario

It has been taking over fields, roadside signs, fences, trees, and even houses in the United States for years, but now, the kudzu vine (*Pueraria montana*) has been discovered in Ontario, on the shores of Lake Erie near the town of Leamington. The kudzu vine is a native of Eastern Asia, and was first brought to North America in 1876 for a centennial exhibition. It was later used for erosion control and promoted as a forage crop. Eventually, it took over much of the southern states and despite attempts to stop it, has continued to spread northward.

“We have been watching the kudzu vine move toward Canada for some time now, with great apprehension. Our colleagues in the south have been fighting a tough battle with this invader, so we need to take immediate action in Ontario to stop kudzu in its tracks,” says Rachel Gagnon, Coordinator of the O.I.P.C. (Ontario Invasive Plant Council), a collective of organizations collaborating to address the spread of alien invasive plants in Ontario. “Fortunately, it’s been found early, so unlike previous invaders, such as dog strangling vine, we have the potential to eradicate kudzu and protect Ontario’s biodiversity. Controlling this menace is critical to maintaining our native plants and wildlife habitat. If we let kudzu become established, it will cause untold ecological and economic damage.”

Like all other invasive species, when the vine takes to its new environment it spreads quickly at the expense of native species, including trees, which are girdled by the vine; broken by its weight; or killed by lack of light. The kudzu grows at an astounding rate of 30 centimeters (one foot) per day, and in a single season can grow up 30 meters (90 feet) in length.

Control measures include hand cutting, mowing, controlled burns and herbicide. Grazing animals, such as goats and pigs have also been effective at containing the spread of the vine over the long term.

The O.I.P.C. is a non-profit, multi-agency organization that facilitates a coordinated response to the threat of invasive plants. The council provides leadership, expertise and a forum to educate, motivate and empower organizations and citizens.

The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, Ontario’s largest nonprofit, fish and wildlife conservation organization, houses the O.I.P.C. and supports its efforts. Visit www.ofah.org to learn more about the O.F.A.H.

To report a sighting of the kudzu vine or any other invasive species, call the O.F.A.H./M.N.R. Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711. Visit www.ontarioinvasiveplants.ca to download a fact sheet on the kudzu vine, or to learn more about other invasive plants.

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