

Invasive Species Alert

Chinese Yam

(*Dioscorea oppositifolia*)

*Detected in Michigan

Identification:

- Pointed, heart-shaped leaves that are often indented on the sides, opposite or alternate
- Slender vines that spiral counter-clockwise
- Bulbils or air tubers present from June to September, resemble very small potatoes
- Small white or greenish-yellow spikes of flowers that smell similar to cinnamon

Habitat: This deciduous vine can be found along roadsides, fence rows, stream banks, ditches, and rich, mesic forests. While it tolerates anything from full sun to deep shade, it prefers intermediate light.



Chris Evans, Illinois Wildlife Action Plan, Bugwood.org



Troy Evans, Great Smoky Mountains National Park,

Native Range: Asia

U.S. Distribution: Chinese yam has spread to 16 southeastern states since its introduction in the 1800's.

Local Concern: Chinese yam can grow up to 16 feet in height, engulfing surrounding vegetation along the way. While this vine dies back in the winter, it grows and reproduces quickly enough to reduce plant diversity and threaten native ecosystems.

Other Common Names: Cinnamon vine, air potato

Native look-alikes and how you can tell them apart from Chinese yam:

- ✓ **Native Yam:** Vines spiral clockwise, no aerial tubers
- ✓ **Greenbrier:** Lacks bulbils, has blue/purple berries
- ✓ **Field bindweed:** Lacks aerial tubers

To report this species, visit www.michigan.gov/invasivespecies for contact information. Report online at www.misin.msu.edu or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone