

Kudzu Vine

Pueraria montana

Region of Origin: Japan and China
Habitat: Perennial, deciduous, vine
Current Range: Every continent except Antarctica
Flowering Season: Late Summer



Kudzu was introduced to the U.S. as a forage crop for cattle in the 1930's. While the plant currently has a limited distribution in the western United States, this is an invader to keep a close eye on. With a growth rate of a foot per day, it's one of the fastest growing plants in the world. It smothers everything it grows on including large trees and, as the American South can testify, it is able to cover vast areas seemingly overnight. Luckily, most of the plant is edible. Stems, leaves, flowers and starch from the root are all used in cooking. In Asia the flowers and roots are used medicinally. The flowers are also quite beautiful, but don't let this plant fool you; it's "the vine that ate the South" so eat it before it eats your landscape.

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Kudzu Blossom Jelly

Recipe and Photo by Molly Marland

Molly notes that kudzu's delicate purple flowers have a fragrance reminiscent of grapes which may be used to make this unique jelly. Spoon the jelly over cream cheese, or melt and serve over waffles and ice cream.

4 cups	Kudzu Blossoms	1¼ oz	Package Powdered Fruit Pectin
4 cups	Boiling Water	5 cups	Sugar
1 Tbsp	Lemon Juice		

- Wash kudzu with cold water.
- Drain well and place in a large bowl.
- Pour 4 cups boiling water over the blossoms and refrigerate overnight (or 8 hours). Note that the blossom liquid is gray until lemon juice is added.
- Strain the resulting liquid through a colander into a Dutch oven, discard blooms.
- Add lemon juice and pectin and then bring to a rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly.
- Stir in sugar. Return to a full boil and stir constantly for one minute.
- Remove from heat and skim away foam with spoon.
- Quickly pour jelly into hot, sterilized jars, filling to ¼ inch from top.
- Wipe jar rims and cover with metal lids and bands.
- Process in boiling water bath for 5 minutes.
- Cool jars on wire racks.

