

# HELP STOP THE SPREAD!

## Japanese Hops (*Humulus japonicus*)

**The Problem:** Japanese hops are increasingly showing up on construction sites and staging areas. Seed is likely being spread through the transport of materials such as loam and gravel and by construction equipment. These herbaceous annual vines can grow up to 35 feet in a single growing season. Vines climb adjacent vegetation and structures and sprawl across open ground to form dense mats several feet deep that smother native vegetation.

**Description:** Japanese hops have palmate leaves (hand-shaped) with 5 to 7 lobes. Stems have short, sharp downward pointing prickles. Flowering occurs in July and August. Male flowers are small, greenish yellow and occur in branched panicles; female flowers are pale green, plump, drooping, cone-like structures with overlapping scales that become 'hops'.

The seeds are believed to remain viable in the soil for three years and are dispersed by wind and water along rivers and streams.



Douglas Goldman



**Management:** Repeated hand-pulling can control small infestations. Pull early in the season before the root system becomes established and extensive. Remove as much of the root as possible. Flowering stems and stems with seed should be bagged or burned. Protective clothing should be worn because of its prickly hooked hairs.

Repeated cutting with a weed-whip or mower can control small infestations. Vines re-grow quickly so frequent cutting is necessary. Cut mid-May through July. Do not mow after seed set in the early fall because the mower will facilitate seed dispersal.

Repeated foliar application of a systemic herbicide can be an effective tool for controlling Japanese hops. Apply in the early summer to prevent seed production. Foliar application can be combined with a pre-emergence herbicide for more effective control. Be sure to read and follow all label directions. Professional application is recommended for large infestations.