



Plants from around the world that have naturalized along the Trail

What is an exotic plant?

A plant that has been introduced (either purposefully or accidentally) into an area outside its native range is referred to as "exotic" or "introduced" in that area.

What is a naturalized plant?

An introduced plant that has escaped cultivation and is reproducing without help from humankind is said to have "naturalized". No longer confined to a garden, naturalized plants are growing wild.

What is an invasive plant?

An introduced plant that not only has naturalized, but also is expanding its range into natural areas and disrupting naturally occurring native plant communities, is considered to be "invasive".

FERNS

↑ **Japanese Climbing Fern** □
Lygodium japonicum. (Asia) This fern-like vine acts more like a vine, with fronds that can reach 100' in length and climb high into trees. (INVASIVE)

Mariana Maiden Fern □ →
Macrotelypteris torresiana. (Asian & African tropics) With highly dissected ("lacy" or bipinnate-pinnatifid), broadly triangular fronds up to 4' long, this is larger than any of the ferns native to this area.

Japanese Red Shield Fern, Autumn Fern □
Dryopteris erythrosora. (Japan, China & Korea) Resembling native woodferns, but with abundant "blistered" scales and fruitlets that may turn brick-red.

GRASSES

Sweet Vernal Grass □
Anthoxanthum odoratum. (Europe) A sweet-smelling perennial grass and one of the first to flower in spring, its pollen is a major cause of spring hay fever. A common component of English pastures and brought here for the same purpose.

Japanese Stiltgrass □
Microstegium vimineum. (tropical southeast Asia) This annual grass arrived in North America as packing material. Virtually unknown in the 50s; today extensive dense patches can be found in almost every county from Mississippi to Connecticut. (INVASIVE)

Johnsongrass □ →
Sorghum halepense. (Eurasia) Sometimes mistaken for young corn, this coarse, tall, fast-growing grass (to 8') was originally imported for forage. Unfortunately for grazing animals, injured or frost-damaged plants can contain deadly levels of cyanide. A very difficult weed in many row-crops and on many states' noxious weed list. (INVASIVE)

Golden Bamboo □ →
Phyllostachys aurea. (China, Japan) Technically a grass, Golden Bamboo grows in dense evergreen thickets up to 30' high, its hollow stems often used for cane fishing poles. Of the various bamboos imported into the country, this is the one most often encountered. (INVASIVE)



TREES & SHRUBS

← **Amur Bush-honeysuckle** □
Lonicera maackii. (east Asia) Imported as an ornamental into New York in 1898, and escaped into eastern woodlands, forests and neglected urban areas. (INVASIVE)

European Blackberry, Himalaya-Berry □ →
Rubus bifrons. (Europe) Differentiated from the native by its pink flowers and long, coarse, sprawling, heavily-armed stems.

Multiflora Rose □ →
Rosa multiflora. (Asia) The long arching canes of this aggressive shrub can clamber into trees or form impenetrable thorny thickets. Its flowers are white; those of the more well-behaved native Swamp Rose, which is also found on the Trail, are pink (see www.scnps.org/swamprabbit). (INVASIVE)

Heavenly Bamboo, Nandina □ →
Nandina domestica. (China) This popular evergreen shrub can apparently grow anywhere, and it is increasingly escaping and naturalizing in suburban woodlands. (INVASIVE)

← **Leatherleaf Mahonia** □
Mahonia bealei. (China) This widely planted evergreen shrub is naturalizing throughout the Southeast, often in suburban woodlands. Look for yellow flowers in winter or early spring, and leaflets that resemble Holly leaves. (INVASIVE)

FORBS/HERBS

Woolly Mullein □ →
Verbascum thapsus. (Europe) Mullein's soft fuzzy leaves and 3-6' tall flower stalks make it easy to recognize. Its seeds can remain viable for over a century.

White Dutch Clover □
Trifolium repens. (Eurasia) Clovers are legumes, one of the few groups of plants with the ability to pull nitrogen out of the air and make it available to other plants through the soil. Before the introduction of broad-leaf herbicides, White Dutch Clover was commonly included in lawn seed mixes.

← **Rabbitfoot Clover** □
Trifolium arvense. (Mediterranean region) The flower heads of this Clover are grayish and furry, like a rabbit's foot....

Red Clover □ →
Trifolium pratense. (Europe) Even though the name says "red", its flowers are pink.

Japanese Knotweed □ ↘
Reynoutria japonica. (east Asia) Mortgage lenders in the United Kingdom won't grant a loan on properties infested with Japanese Knotweed, because its extensive rhizomes can cause structural damage and it is very difficult to eradicate. (INVASIVE)

← **Chamber Bitter** □
Phyllanthus urinaria. (tropical southeast Asia) Used in Asia to treat kidney stones and gallstones, better known here as a profusely seedling, tenacious-rooted, warm-season annual weed. **Be warned!** Don't let it go to seed!

European Field Pansy □ ↓
Viola arvensis. (Europe) Similar to the native Johnny-jump-up (see other side), but its flowers are cream and yellow marked with purple.

← **Beefsteak-plant, Perilla** □
Perilla frutescens. (India) Superficially resembles Basil or Coleus, and can be confused with other Mint family members. Perilla has toxic characteristics, and it is fed on by very few herbivores. Reported to be invasive in mid-Atlantic states.

Chinese Privet □ →
Ligustrum sinense. (China) Considered to be one of the most noxious of all our weeds, this semi-evergreen shrub forms dense stands that choke out native vegetation and have almost engulfed bottomlands throughout the South. (INVASIVE)

← **Winged Burning Bush** □
Euonymus alatus. (east Asia) Called "burning bush" because of its brilliant fall color and "winged" because of the corky wings which often line its squarish twigs. This widely planted landscape plant is causing serious problems northward and is now showing up here in our suburban woodlands. (INVASIVE)

Paper Mulberry □ →
Broussonetia papyrifera. (east Asia) Paper Mulberry's leaf shape is quite variable and can look as if cut out by a bizarre jigsaw. Leaf undersides are velvety-hairy. (INVASIVE)

← **White Mulberry** □
Morus alba. (east Asia) Introduced in the 1700s in a failed attempt to establish a silk industry. White Mulberry's variable leaf shape can be confused with Paper Mulberry or the native Red Mulberry, but its leaves are mostly hairless. Its berries are edible, but not as flavorful as the native. (INVASIVE)

← **Henbit** □ *Lamium amplexicaule*. (Eurasia, northern Africa) The name "henbit" comes from the notion (maybe fact) that free-range chickens like to eat the whole plant and its seeds. Rich in carotene, it gives a nice dark yellow color to the yolks of a hen's eggs.

← **Purple Deadnettle** □ *Lamium purpureum*. (Eurasia) Deadnettle is closely related and often grows with Henbit (as shown at left). The young fresh leaves of both can be used as pot herbs or in salads.

Fig Buttercup, Lesser Celandine □ →
Ficaria verna (Ranunculus ficaria). (Europe) This garden escape is an aggressive invasive that threatens bottomlands throughout eastern North America. In SC, it is illegal to buy, sell, trade, or possess. In 2013, a birder noticed this plant in the Reedy River floodplain at Lake Conestee Nature Preserve, its first documented naturalized occurrence in the state. **Watch a video at** <http://scnps.org/citizen-science-invasive-fig-buttercup/> (INVASIVE)

Queen Anne's Lace, Wild Carrot □
Daucus carota. (Europe) An ancestor of the cultivated carrot, this conspicuous introduced wildflower is established in 48 states, more common now than the very similar American Wild Carrot.

Dandelion □
Taraxacum officinale (Eurasia) Whenever you see "officinale" in a plant's name, know that it was kept handy in the storerooms of medicines and other necessities. Considered a weed by gardeners today, but so highly valued that European colonists deliberately included seeds in their luggage.

← **Ox-eye Daisy** □
Leucanthemum vulgare. (Eurasia) Its flat flower heads with white rays and yellow centers make this common plant easy to recognize.

Bachelor's Buttons □
Cyanus segetum (Centaurae cyanus). (Mediterranean Europe) The flowers of this common introduction are typically a startling electric blue.

Spotted Knapweed □
Centaurea stoebe. (Europe) Flowers similar to those of Bachelor's Buttons, but pinkish. Its taproot allows it to tolerate drought, and its allelochemicals poison would-be competitors. Designated a noxious weed in most western states. (INVASIVE)

Bradford Pear, Callery Pear □
Pyrus calleryana. (China) Hailed as a promising new ornamental in the 1950s, but as early as the 80s concerns were voiced about overplanting and limb breakage. Today, it continues to be planted, even as it aggressively colonizes neighboring fields. (INVASIVE)

← **Chinaberry** □
Melia azedarach. (southeast Asia) Easy to spot in winter by the large clusters of orangish berrylike fruit, which is poisonous to humans and livestock, and in summer by its twice-pinnately compound leaves. A member of the Mahogany family. (INVASIVE)

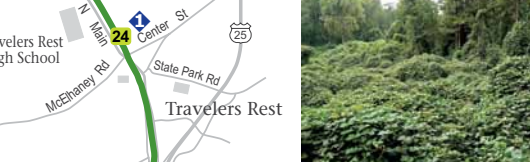
← **Mimosa** □ *Albizia julibrissis*. (tropical Asia) Introduced to Charleston in the 1700s, this tree is now found in virtually every county from eastern Texas to Delaware. The doubly-compound leaves look almost fernlike, and its pink flowers resemble pompoms. (INVASIVE)

← **Tree-of-heaven** □
Ailanthus altissima. (east Asia) A fast-growing tree that can reach 80' in height, it is an aggressive and noxious weed, colonizing even undisturbed forests and outcompeting native vegetation. Its leaves are pinnately compound and up to 4' long. It can be distinguished from native shrubs and trees with similar leaves (such as Sumacs, Black Walnut, or Pecan), by the unpleasant burnt-peanut-butter odor of its crushed foliage/cut twigs and by leaflet margins with one or two teeth. (INVASIVE)

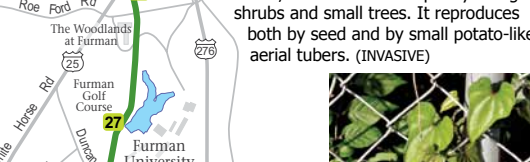
These are only some of the plants growing wild on the Trail; to see more, visit www.scnps.org/swampabbit. To learn more about them, participate in a South Carolina Native Plant Society field trip, plant rescue, workday or meeting, and come to our native plant sale! Visit www.scnps.org to see what's going on!

VINES

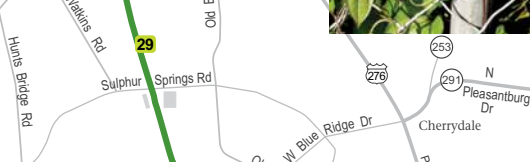
Kudzu □ ↘
Pueraria montana. (east Asia) Kudzu, "the vine that ate the South", is the poster child of invasive plants, but experts say it is actually one of the lesser threats — reasons include its intolerance of shade and the fact that it drops its foliage after the first frost. The flowers smell like grape kool-aid. (INVASIVE)



Cinnamon Vine, Chinese Yam □ ↓
Dioscorea polystachya. (China) Sold as a fast-growing ornamental in the early 1900s, it wasn't until the 1980s that it was noticed in the wild, where vines can quickly overgrow shrubs and small trees. It reproduces both by seed and by small potato-like aerial tubers. (INVASIVE)



Japanese Hops □
Humulus japonicus. (Japan, Taiwan, China) Related to the Hops used to make beer, but with different chemistry. Leaves usually have 5 lobes and the stems have downward-pointing prickles. (INVASIVE)

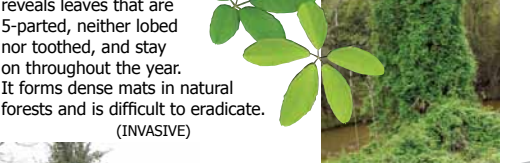


Cat's Ear □
Hypochaeris radicata. (Eurasia) At a glance you would think this was a Dandelion, but its hairy leaves and branched flowering stalks reveal its true identity.

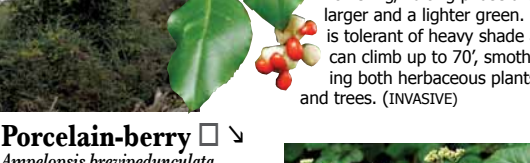


Chinese Wisteria □ ←
Wisteria sinensis. (China) Introduced in 1916 as an ornamental and still popular in the nursery trade, despite being reported as invasive from Massachusetts to Texas. The twining vines climb trees, shrubs and manmade structures. (INVASIVE)

Chocolate-vine, Akebia □ ↘
Akebia quinata. (Japan, China, Korea) A sideways glance at a clambering vine engulfing small trees and shrubs and you might assume "Kudzu", but a closer look reveals leaves that are 5-parted, neither lobed nor toothed, and stay on throughout the year. It forms dense mats in natural forests and is difficult to eradicate. (INVASIVE)



Wintercreeper □
Euonymus fortunei. (China) In its sterile, juvenile, "creeping" phase, this woody vine has dark green leaves with silvery veins; leaves of the mature, flowering/fruiting phase are larger and a lighter green. It is tolerant of heavy shade and can climb up to 70', smothering both herbaceous plants and trees. (INVASIVE)

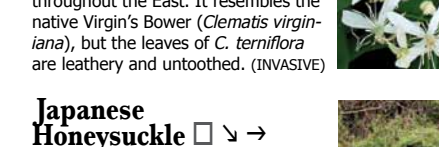


Porcelain-berry □ ↘
Ampelopsis brevipedunculata (A. glandulosa). (northeast Asia) If you look only at its leaves, you might think this was one of our native grape vines, but its erect flower clusters, multi-colored fruit, and warty-looking bark set it apart. This has naturalized extensively on the Trail but apparently has only recently been noticed. (INVASIVE)

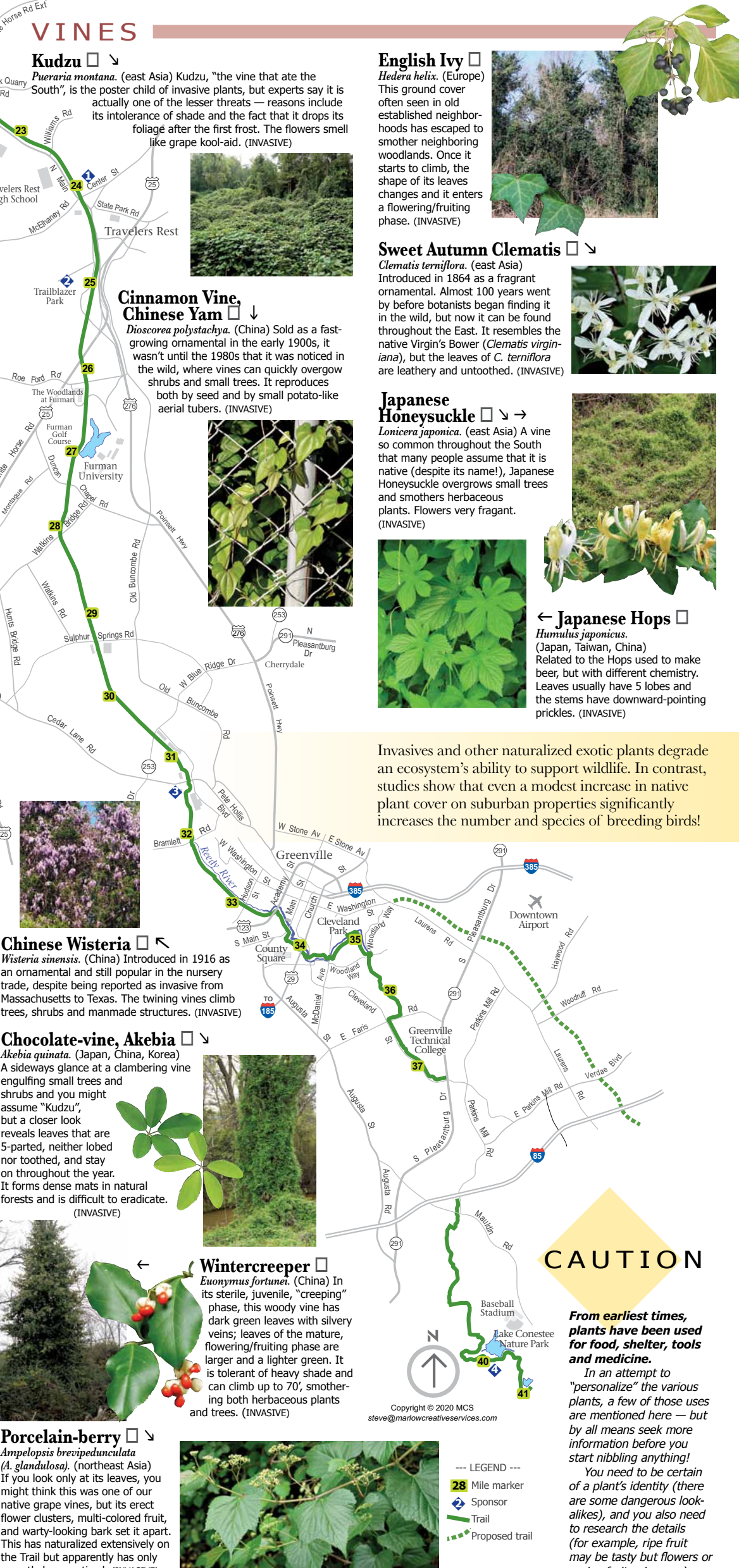
English Ivy □
Hedera helix. (Europe) This ground cover often seen in old established neighborhoods has escaped to smother neighboring woodlands. Once it starts to climb, the shape of its leaves changes and it enters a flowering/fruiting phase. (INVASIVE)



Sweet Autumn Clematis □ ↘
Clematis terniflora. (east Asia) Introduced in 1864 as a fragrant ornamental. Almost 100 years went by before botanists began finding it in the wild, but now it can be found throughout the East. It resembles the native Virgin's Bower (*Clematis virginiana*), but the leaves of *C. terniflora* are leathery and untoothed. (INVASIVE)



Japanese Honeysuckle □ ↘ →
Lonicera japonica. (east Asia) A vine so common throughout the South that many people assume that it is native (despite its name!), Japanese Honeysuckle overgrows small trees and smothers herbaceous plants. Flowers very fragrant. (INVASIVE)



CAUTION

From earliest times, plants have been used for food, shelter, tools and medicine. In an attempt to "personalize" the various plants, a few of those uses are mentioned here — but by all means seek more information before you start nibbling anything! You need to be certain of a plant's identity (there are some dangerous look-alikes), and you also need to research the details (for example, ripe fruit may be tasty but flowers or unripe fruit poisonous).

WILD PLANTS on the rabbit trail. 2ND EDITION

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