

CHINESE LESPEDEZA

[*Lespedeza cuneata* (Dum. Cours.) G. Don]
LECU



Fig.1

UGA 5302020

Problem: Native to eastern Asia,^{1,2,5,7} Chinese lespedeza (Fig.1) forms dense, vigorously spreading stands that displace native plants. Allelopathic compounds inhibit native plant colonization and an extensive taproot enables competitiveness during droughts.^{3,6}

Habit: Erect,^{5,7} shrubby, perennial.^{1,3,4,5,6} Shade intolerant.³

Reproduction: Spreads vegetatively via root system and sexually via seed production;^{3,4} Cross and self-pollinates.⁴

Leaves: Alternate, trifoliate (Fig. 2).^{2,3} Leaflets ½ to 3 cm long ($\sim\frac{3}{16}$ to $1\frac{3}{16}$ in),^{3,4,6,7} oblong to linear with a hair-like tip or mucron,^{2,4} and base is wedge-shaped or cuneate.^{3,5,6} Leaves are green and smooth (glabrous) above, white to gray with dense hairs beneath (pubescent).^{1,2,4,5,6,7}

Stems: Coarse, stiff;^{2,6} upright to ascending,⁷ 1 to 2 m (3 to 6 ft);^{1,4,7} often gray-green with lines of hairs.⁴

Flowers: July to October;^{3,4,5,6} two types:^{3,6} showier flowers



Fig.2

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Fig.3

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Fig. 4

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emerge from the leaf axils bearing clusters of 1 to 4 creamy white to light yellow pea-like flowers marked with purple or pink (Figs. 3 and 4);^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} The other flower type does not have showy petals and typically do not open.⁶

Fruits/Seeds: September to October;⁷ flat, ovate to round, and pubescent single-seeded legume pod or loment; 2-5 mm long ($\sim 1/16$ to $3/16$).^{5,6,7} Loments are clustered in terminal axils and clasped by persistent sepals.^{4,7}

Habitat: Meadows, pastures, forest openings,⁴ and disturbed habitats like roadsides and drainage ditches;^{3,6} tolerates poor soil conditions.^{3,6}

Similar Species: Slender lespedeza [*Lespedeza virginica* (L.) Britton] (Fig. 5) grows in tufted clumps, stems are fewer, weaker,⁶ and not spreading. It also produces pink to purple flowers in crowded clusters.^{2,4} Roundhead lespedeza (*L. capitata* Michx.) produces head-like or capitate clusters

(Fig. 6) of white flowers;⁴ leaflets are larger.^{2,5}



Fig.5

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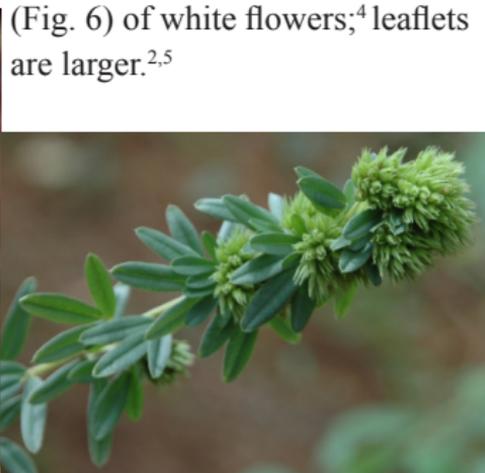


Fig. 6

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