



Japanese Dodder

Invasive Plant Detected in Sacramento



What is Japanese Dodder? It is an exotic parasitic plant recently discovered in Sacramento that kills trees and landscape plants. Japanese Dodder (*Cuscuta japonica* Choisy) is also called "devil's hair," "devil's guts," or "strangleweed."

How does it kill trees and shrubs?

Dodder lacks the chlorophyll that makes plants green. Thus, it must feed off a living host in order to obtain its nutrients. This parasitic action drains the host of vital resources needed for healthy growth. Japanese Dodder will weaken and eventually kill any tree or plant it grows on.

How do I identify Japanese Dodder? Japanese Dodder is a yellow-green vine that resembles spaghetti (see photos). It attacks at least 20 different plant species in southern Texas, including ornamental trees and shrubs such as live oak, crapemyrtle and wax leaf Ligustrum.

Seed production. In the spring, the dodder plant produces flowers which, in turn, may yield seed for a new generation of dodder plants. Dodder seeds are the size of coffee grains and can remain dormant in the soil for 10-20 years. Usually most seed will sprout the following year. It is not known at this time if dodder would produce viable seed in California.



How does it spread?

Japanese Dodder grows as much as 6 inches per day! It can rapidly spread by growing from one infected plant to healthy plants nearby. It can also spread to new areas in at least two other ways; by fragmentation and, potentially, by seed production.

Who do I contact if I find Japanese Dodder in my neighborhood? If you find Japanese Dodder within Sacramento County, notify: **Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner, 4137 Branch Center Rd., Sacramento, CA 95827**
Phone: 916-875-6744 e-mail: wilsond@saccounty.net.

If you find Japanese Dodder outside of Sacramento County, notify the Agricultural Commissioner in that county.

