Scientific Name: ***Lonicera japonica*** **Common Name: Japanese Honeysuckle**

Updated: 5/5/2016

A. **Priority: B**

B. **Description –** Japanese honeysuckle is a perennial vine that climbs by twisting its stems around vertical structures, including limbs and trunks of shrubs and small trees. Leaves are oblong to oval, sometimes lobed, have short stalks, and occur in pairs along the stem. Young stems are slender, while older stems are hollow with brownish bark that peels in long strips. Flowers are tubular, with five fused petals, white to pink, turning yellow with age, very fragrant, and occur in pairs along the stem at leaf junctures. Stems and leaves are sometimes covered with fine, soft hairs. Japanese honeysuckle blooms from late April through July and sometimes into October. Small black fruits are produced in autumn, each containing 2-3 oval to oblong, dark brown seeds about 1/4 inch across. The invasive species is distinguished from North Carolina's 3 native species by the leaves near the tips of the vines. The leaves of *L. japonica* are distinctly separate. In our native species, the leaves are fused to form a single leaf through which the stem grows. In contrast to the red and orange fruits of native *Lonicera spp.*, *L. japonica* has black fruits.

C. **Damage and threats –** Japanese honeysuckle has few natural enemies which allows it to spread widely and out-compete native plant species. Its evergreen to semi-evergreen nature gives it an added advantage over native species in many areas. Shrubs and young trees can be killed by girdling when vines twist tightly around stems and trunks, cutting off the flow of water through the plant. Dense growths of honeysuckle covering vegetation can gradually kill plants by blocking sunlight from reaching their leaves. Vigorous root competition also helps Japanese honeysuckle spread and displace neighboring native vegetation. Hybridization of Japanese Honeysuckle with our native species has further lead to the disappearance of our native *Lonicera spp*.

D. **Management Options –**

Mechanical Control: Hand pulling established Japanese Honeysuckle can be difficult, particularly with the largest vines. Roots run long distances with stems emerging along the way, even in young plants. It can be hard to remove most of the root, especially in some soils. Repeated hand pulling in an area will eventually achieve control, but requires commitment and follow through. Japanese Honeysuckle seedlings are easiest to remove when the soil is moist and the population is small. Pull steadily and slowly to minimize soil disturbance and tamp down the soil afterwards. In small infestations, larger plants can also be removed by digging if care is taken to remove all roots. This is not practical for larger infestations, however. It is important to verify whether young shoots are actually seedlings or sprouts from an established plant with extensive roots. If it is the latter, chemical control methods should be used if the entire plant cannot be readily removed by digging. Once the initial honeysuckle infestation is eradicated, hand pulling may be used to remove seedlings discovered during routine monitoring. All pulled

material needs to be bagged and removed to prevent vegetative regeneration. For control of more established populations of honeysuckle, use a chemical control method.

Chemical Control: Use of a systematic herbicide is the best option to control Japanese Honeysuckle. We recommend using aquatic formulations of herbicides in this region to limit potentially unwanted effects to the surrounding environment.

a. **Foliar Spray - –** This method involves spraying a dilute herbicide directly onto the plants leaves. Application needs to occur when foliage is present, sometime between full leaf and the onset of fall for full effectiveness. Caution should be taken when applying herbicide with this method as non-target plants can easily be killed by drift or overspray. Application should cover at least 80% of the leaves. To treat Japanese Honeysuckle, use a 3-4% solution of aquatic triclopyr in water with a 0.5% non-ionic surfactant and apply directly to leaves until just before runoff. Air temperatures must be above 65 degrees and winds should be lower than 5 mph.
b. **Cut Stump-** This method involves cutting the stem as close to the ground as possible (no more as 5in. but no less than 1/4in.) and immediately applying a systematic herbicide. It is best to use this method between summer and fall, but it may be used as long as the ground is not frozen. To treat using this method, apply a 50% formulation of aquatic triclopyr or glyphosate directly to the cut stump. Treated plants should be continually monitored for re-sprouting. This method is recommended for treating small and large populations.

E. Recommended Management Strategy

a. We recommend treating dense or monoculture Japanese Honeysuckle via foliar spray. For infestations mixed with desired native plants, we recommend treating via foliar spray on a warm day during the winter. All tree bound vines should be treated via cut stump prior to any foliar treatment.
b. Multiple applications will be necessary to ensure control.
c. The chosen treatment process should be repeated at least once each year for three years to ensure control.

F. Additional and Updated Information

For additional information including photographs and the most up to date control recommendations please visit www.wachng.org/Plants.