

Air Potato In Georgia

Air potato vine is a highly invasive plant species that threatens our native forests and ecosystems. This brochure serves as a guide to the basic facts about the air potato vine and its treatment.

For more information please contact your local UGA Extension office by calling 1-800-ASK-UGA1 or visit extension.uga.edu.



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Air Potato Vine (*Dioscorea bulbifera*)

Ecology and Management

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Ecology

- Highly invasive plant species originally from Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa
- Grows up to 8 inches per day
- Grows up to 70 feet in length
- Smothers tree canopies and increases risk of fire
- Produces “bulbils” at every leaf node which drop to the ground and sprout a new plant
- Very prolific
- Displaces and chokes out native plant species



Distinguishing Characteristics

- Large heart shaped leaves
- Alternate leaves
- All veins originate at the leaf base
- In late summer or early fall the plant produces a bulbil or “potato” at every leaf node
- Vines die back in winter



Treatment Options

Mechanical Control:

- Cut back vines
- Collect potatoes that have fallen to the ground and dig up buried potatoes by following vines to the source. Incinerate bulbils or freeze overnight before disposal.

Chemical Control:

- Triclopyr or glyphosate
- Follow all label directions

Biological Control:

- Air potato beetle

Air Potato Beetle

Lilioceris cheni

- Adults are approximately 9mm long and 4mm wide
- Elytra (hardened outer wings) are red, orange, or brown
- Head, thorax, legs, and abdomen are black
- Females deposit clusters of eggs on the underside of young leaves
- Females produce more than 1200 eggs in their lifetime
- Adults live 5 or more months
- Adults and larvae feed on air potato
- Feed primarily on leaf tissue and occasionally on bulbils
- Feeds only on air potato vine

