

Ambrosia L. Ragweed Asteraceae

Annual and perennial herbs, with the annual species comprising some of the most commonly-occurring plants in the SE. Leaves opposite on the lower part and often alternate on the upper parts, usually lobed or dissected, margins serrate, and long petioles. Male and female flowers separate, with small female heads occurring below male heads in the axils of leaves or bracts, ray petals and plumed pappus absent. Nutlets (achenes) dark brown or black, round or nearly round, and beaked. 5 species in the SE.

Common Species

Ambrosia artemisiifolia L. - common ragweed **AMBEL**

Plant: Common, erect late-summer annual, 1-3 m tall, with densely-branched stems forming a bushy rounded top, from shallow taproot. Foliage fragrant when crushed.

Stem: Upright, slender and hairy early becoming stout and hairless, branched from base.

Leaves: Opposite basally and alternate upward, deeply bipinnately dissected, 4-10 cm long and 3-6 cm wide, segments mostly less than 1 cm wide.

Flowers: Aug-Nov. Terminal spike-like racemes, erect to drooping, 5-15 cm long, male flowers in tiny saucer-shaped heads, 1.5-2.5 mm wide, terminating the flower stalk above fewer female flowers, 2-4 mm wide, enclosed in foliar bracts.

Fruit and seeds: Sep-Dec. Beaked nutlet (achene), 3-4 mm long and 2-2.5 mm wide, yellowish-brown to reddish brown sometimes bluish near tip, central beak 1-2 mm long surrounded by 4-7 shorter projections, nutlet containing 1 ovoid seed.

Range: Native. Throughout US, most common in the Eastern and North Central States.

Ecology: Very common in the SE, early invader of disturbed soils such as new forest plantations, declining in abundance after the second year. Found singly or in dense colonies. Spreads by bird-dispersed seeds. Seeds being persistent in soil bank.

Ambrosia trifida L. - giant ragweed **AMBTR**

Similar to *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* except **plant** larger annual, 1-6 m tall; **stem** angled, up to 3-10 cm wide, striate green, often hairless below and spreading hairy above; **leaves** opposite, palmately 3-5 lobed (trident shaped) and upper ones unlobed, 7-30 cm long, margins serrate, surfaces scruffy hairy, petioled; **flowers** (Sep-Dec) male flowers abundant in slender terminal racemes, flowers 3-5 mm wide, 5-6 lobed, stalk 2-7 mm long, female flowers in tufted fascicles (4-5) in upper leaf axils, 6-13 mm long and 5-10 mm wide, ascending sharp projections toward the apex, hairy; **fruit and seeds** (Oct-Dec) beaked woody nutlet (achene), 5-10 mm long and 2-3 mm wide, black, obovoid with several ribs, each rib ending in a short spine, nutlet containing 1 black seed, 4-5 mm long, finely pitted.

Range: Native. TX to c FL and north to Que and west to CO and BC, mainly Pd, Mt, and Mississippi River Valley in the SE.

Ecology: Early invader of disturbed lands near rivers and streams. Common species adjacent to the Mississippi River on alluvial terraces and in young forests on moist soils. Usually on wetter soils than common ragweed. Often occurring in colonies. Spreads by seeds, persistent in soil bank.

Synonyms: horse-cane, richweed.

Other species in the SE: *A. bidentata* Michx., *A. hispida* Pursh, *A. psilostachya* DC.

Wildlife: Common ragweed ranks among the most important seed and cover-producing plants for bobwhite quail. Seeds also are consumed readily by numerous songbirds including mourning dove, Eastern goldfinch, dark-eyed junco, and species of sparrows. Also a common preferred deer browse during spring and summer. Giant ragweed is a moderate to poor deer browse, but its large seeds are little used by birds.

Ambrosia L. Ragweed Asteraceae



T. Bohner (Sep)

Ambrosia artemisiifolia



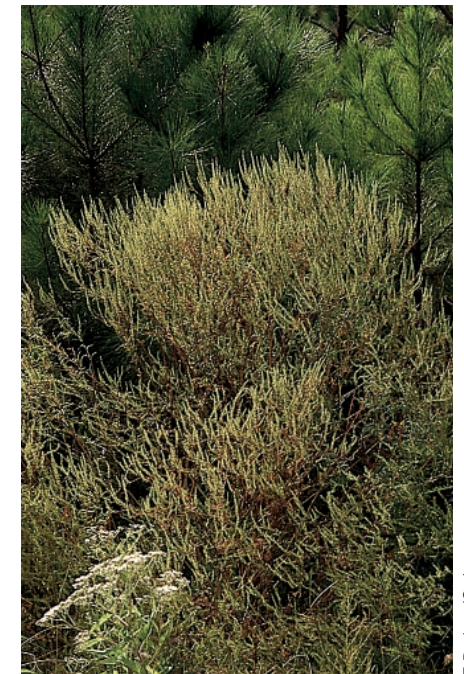
T. Bohner (May)

Ambrosia artemisiifolia



T. Bohner (Jun)

Ambrosia trifida



T. Bohner (Oct)

Ambrosia artemisiifolia

Saccharum Plumegrass Poaceae

Erect, stout and reed-like, perennial grasses, forming clumps, from harden bases or short rhizomes. Leaves mainly lower-stem, long-attenuate and flat, having long hairs near the base, and ligule a fringed membrane. Large terminal panicles, white to reddish hairy in most species, having spikelets in pairs, one stemmed and one sessile. Same genus as sugarcane. 6 species in the SE.

Common Species

***Saccharum alopecuroides* (L.) Nutt. - silver plumegrass** **ERNAL**

Plant: Erect, large grass, 1.5-3 m tall, with long flat leaves mainly from the lower stem, from harden bases or short rhizomes and having coarse shallow roots.

Stem (culm): Stout, round, green or purplish, densely hairy just below panicle, nodes usually densely hairy and purplish, internodes short-haired or hairless.

Leaves: Mostly on lower stem and scattered alternate upward, blades to 75 cm long and mostly 2-3 cm wide, white midvein above, white hair tufts at nodes and throat, long hairs on lower margins and upper surface of lowermost portion, ligule fringed membrane, 1-4 mm long.

Flowers: Sep-Nov. Panicle silvery-whitish or purplish woolly, 20-30 cm long, branches ascending or spreading, spikelets lanceolate, 5-6 mm long, cream to yellowish, awns thread-like, 1-2 cm long, flat and spirally twisted, bristle hairs from spikelet base longer than spikelet.

Seeds: Oct-Feb. Grain reddish, 2-2.5 mm long, released in husks with white or tawny hairs and twisted awn.

Range: Native. TX to FL and north to NJ and west to IL and MO, less frequent in Mt.

Ecology: Occurs commonly as individuals or colonies, in new forest plantations, forest openings, and along forest margins and rights-of-way. Found on dry to moist sites and open to semi-shady habitat. Persists by rhizomes and spreads by wind-dispersed seeds.

Synonyms: *Erianthus alopecuroides* (L.) Ell., *E. divaricatus* (L.) A.S. Hitchc.

***Saccharum giganteum* (Walt.) Pers. - sugarcane plumegrass** **ERNGI**

Similar to *Saccharum alopecuroides* except **plant** 1-4 m tall; **leaves** blades flat to 50 cm long and to 2.5 cm wide, long-white hairy near base and short-hairy or not elsewhere, sheaths hairy near throat and on margins; **flowers** panicles ascending branches, spikelets brown, 5-7 mm long, awns round and straight, hair bristles exceed husks. **Range:** Native. TX to FL and north to NY and southwest to KY and AR, mostly Cp and lower Pd.

Ecology: Occurs on moist to wet sites.

Synonyms: *Erianthus giganteus* (Walt.) P. Beauv., *E. giganteus* var. *compactus* (Nash) Fern., *E. laxus* Nash, *E. saccharoides* Michx., *E. tracyi* Nash, beardgrass.

Other species in the SE: *S. baldwinii* Spreng., *S. brevibarbe* (Michx.) Pers., *S. contortum* (Ell.) Nutt., *S. ravennae* (L.) L.

Wildlife: Plumegrass has little wildlife value. The seeds are consumed sparingly by some songbirds.

Saccharum Plumegrass



J. Miller (Oct)

Saccharum giganteum

Poaceae



T. Bohner (Oct)

Saccharum alopecuroides



T. Bohner (Sep)

Saccharum alopecuroides



J. Miller (Oct)

Saccharum alopecuroides

Pueraria DC. Kudzu Fabaceae

Exotic semiwoody vine, legume, twining and trailing to form dense infestations covering ground and trees. Large 3-leaflet leaves, finely hairy, slightly lobed or entire, alternate on rope-like vines. Flowers in reddish-purple spike-like racemes. Fruit a flattened legume-type capsule, brown hairy, splitting to release few seeds, oval and hard-coated. 1 species in the SE.

Common Species

Pueraria lobata (Willd.) Ohwi - kudzu PUELO

Plant: Twining and trailing, semiwoody vine, 10-30 m long, from semiwoody tuberous roots weighing up to many kilograms and reaching up to 1-5 m deep.

Stem: Stout, round in cross-section, frequent unswollen nodes, rooting at nodes when on ground or buried, trailing or climbing by twining on objects less than 10 cm in diameter, infrequent branching, yellow-green and dense-erect golden hairy, becoming silver matted hairy aging to light gray barked and rope-like, hairless, eventually rough-barked and usually dark brown, rigid, up to 10 cm diam and larger.

Leaves: Alternate, 3-leaflet, leaflets 8-18 cm long and 6-20 cm wide, usually slightly lobed (or unlobed in shade), middle-leaflet symmetric and 2-lobed, side leaflets 1-lobed on lower sides, pointed tipped, margins golden fine-hairy, dark green and golden hairy above and densely-matted silver hairy beneath appearing whitish-green, swollen brown-hairy petioles subtended by 2 thin bracts, about 1 cm long, leaf stalks 15-30 cm long, long hairy with a swollen base and 2 stipules.

Flowers: Jun-Sep. Axillary spike-like dense racemes, 5-30 cm long, flowers in pairs (or 3's) from raised nodes spiraling up the stalk, opening from base to top on bracted short hairy pedicels, pea-type flowers, upper hood petal (banner) lavender-rose to wine-colored with an inner yellow spot, lower jutting wing and keel petals darker wine to purple, calyx short-tubular, greenish turning dull purple, flowers insect pollinated.

Fruit and seeds: Sep-Jan. Dry legume pod, flattened and bulging above the seeds, 3-5 cm long and 8-10 mm wide, tan and stiff golden-brown hairy, splitting and twisting on 1-2 sides to release 1-few seeds, ovoid, 3 mm long, light brown with tan dots, small percentage filled or viable.

Range: Exotic from China. TX to FL and north to CT and west to IL, NE, and OK.

Ecology: Nitrogen fixer. Vines root at nodes when in contact with ground (stoloniferous) or buried by leaf-litter (somewhat rhizomonous) yielding new plants when connecting vine dies, with 1-3 plant per square meter in infested patches. Twining capabilities limited to supports less than 10 cm in diameter, mainly climbing larger trees by twining on other kudzu vines or other vines. Forming dense mats over the ground, debris, shrubs, and trees, excluding most other plants except evergreen shrubs and vines, and blackberries. Planted widely for erosion control and livestock feed on about 1 million hectares from 1920-50, occurs in old infestations, along rights-of-way and stream banks, and spreading outward.

Synonyms: *P. montana* (Lour.) Merr., *P. montana* var. *lobata* (Willd.) Maesen & S. Almeida, *P. thunbergiana* (Sieb. & Zucc.) Benth., kuzu.

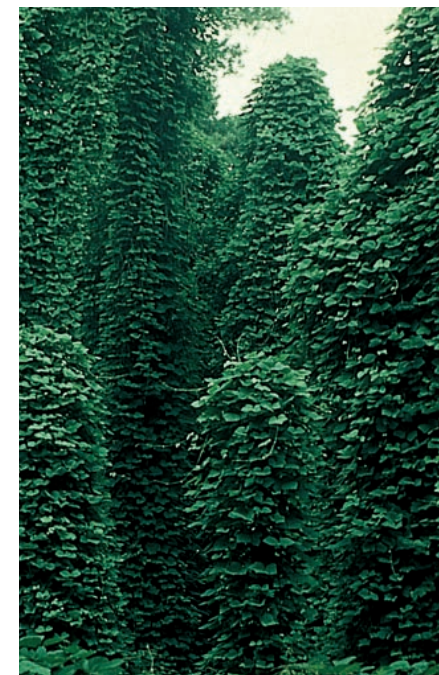
Wildlife: Kudzu is an excellent deer forage until killed by frost. The dense thickets provide excellent cover, particularly for young fawns. Kudzu is a larval host of the Silver-spotted Skipper butterfly.

Pueraria DC Kudzu

Fabaceae



Pueraria lobata



Pueraria lobata



Pueraria lobata



Pueraria lobata

Aralia L. Aralia Araliaceae

Perennial herbs, shrubs, or small trees, with alternate spreading leaves, once to twice pinnately compound, somewhat aromatic. Flowers white or greenish-white, in spherical-shaped branched clusters, panicles or racemes or umbels. Fruit a small drupe, purple or purplish-black, 5-seeded. 4 species in the SE.

Common Species

***Aralia spinosa* L. - hercules club**

Plant: Deciduous shrub or small tree, 1-5 m tall, usually unbranched, bristling with sharp thorns, at times in small groups from rootsprouts.

Stem: Straight, upright, unbranched until the season after the first flowering, afterwards with few ascending branches, bark tan and generally smooth, short sharp thorns in horizontal rows, often most numerous at prominent U-shaped leaf scars around the stem.

Leaves: Alternately spiraling, pinnately compound, very large, 60-150 cm long (including petiole), nearly triangular in outline, arising from the main stem, leaflets elliptic or ovate, 5-13 cm long and 4-7 cm wide, dark green above often with prickles on the midvein and whitish-green beneath, leaf stalk stout and often prickly, base flattened and clasping the stem obliquely.

Flowers: Jul-Aug. Showy large terminal panicles, 60-120 cm tall and wide, numerous small creamy-white flowers, petals 5, stamens 5.

Fruit and seeds: Sep-Oct. Abundant purple-black drupes, 5-8 mm wide, each with 5 seeds.

Range: Native. TX to FL and north to NJ and west to IA.

Ecology: Occurs in upland and lowland forests, thickets, and swamp margins. Present in dense woods, but needs some direct sun to flower. Aromatic leaves turn a pleasing maroon-red in autumn. Persists and colonizes by rhizomes and spreads by bird-dispersed seeds.

Synonyms: devils-walkingstick, angelica tree, prickly ash, toothache tree.

Other species in the SE: *A. nudicaulis* L. [wild sarsaparilla], *A. racemosa* L. [American spikenard], *A. hispida* Vent. [bristly sarsaparilla].

Wildlife: The small, fleshy fruits and seeds of *A. spinosa*, along with the other species of this genus are eaten by some songbirds, such as the wood thrush, northern cardinal, mockingbird, brown thrasher, blue jay, Eastern bluebird, and white-throated sparrow. Fruit also reportedly eaten by red fox, striped skunk, and eastern chipmunk, although this species is never abundant enough to compose a significant portion of their diets. Flowers are very attractive to bees, wasps, and tiger swallowtail butterfly. Foliage is a moderate preference white-tailed deer browse.

Aralia L. Aralia Araliaceae



T. Bohner (Oct)

Aralia spinosa



T. Bohner (Aug)

Aralia spinosa



T. Bohner (Mar)

Aralia spinosa



T. Bohner (Sep)

Aralia spinosa