

PARASITIC PLANT WARNING

Japanese Dodder, (*Cuscuta japonica*)

This noxious plant was recently discovered in a residential area in Yuba City by the Sutter County Department of Agriculture.

Japanese dodder is a very aggressive parasitic plant that affects ornamental plantings and agricultural crops as well as having the potential to severely alter the composition and function of riparian areas. It is an "A" rated noxious plant by the California Department of Food & Agriculture (CDFA) and it is listed as a Federal noxious weed. The dodder itself looks very similar to a thick diameter spaghetti noodle that is bright yellow-orange. It can completely engulf host plants and often drapes to the ground.

Japanese dodder was first found in California in Redding in the summer of 2004, then in Yuba County in 2005. Eradication is accomplished by removal and burial of all infested plant material. It is suspected that the introduction is the result of illegal importation of dodder seed.



Japanese dodder is very different from our native California dodder species. The native dodders attack small plants like tomato, alfalfa and pickleweed. The Asian dodders attack a wide variety of smaller plants, shrubs and a wide host of full grown trees including many of our native trees and fruit trees.



The non-native dodder species is spread both by seed and vegetatively, and can aggressively move to other host plants. Once a seed or growing tip finds a host, it sends root-like structures called haustoria into this host's limbs, sucking out water and nutrients that can eventually kill it. Japanese dodder attacks full grown trees including many of our California native and agricultural fruit trees.

The seeds purportedly have medicinal properties in some cultures, and may have been imported illegally and inadvertently spread. There is a Federal Department of Agriculture quarantine against importing plants or viable seed.

For more information about this plant contact the Sutter County Agricultural Commissioner at (530) 822- 7500

If you have seen this plant, please call to report at (800) 491-1899