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Lonicera japonica

[Synonyms : *Lonicera flexuosa*, *Lonicera japonica* var. *aureo-reticulata*, *Lonicera japonica* var. *chinensis*, *Nintooa japonica*]

JAPANESE HONEYSUCKLE is an invasive clockwise-twining, semi-evergreen climbing shrub. Native to eastern Asia (particularly China, Korea and Japan), it has small and very fragrant, occasionally pink-tinged, white maturing to yellow flowers with projecting stamens.

It is also known as Chinese honeysuckle, Gold and silver flower, Honeysuckle, *Japanisches Geissblatt* (German), Sweet honeysuckle, and Woodbine.

The sweet nectar can be drawn from the base of the petals.

Warning – the leaves and berries are said to be poisonous and to have been the cause of human and animal deaths. The plant is said to cause vomiting and it can cause dermatitis.

Japonica means ‘of or from Japan’.

Japanese honeysuckle was introduced to both Europe and North America from Asia. The European introduction is believed to have occurred in 1806. The first resident professional collector in China was a William Kerr and this species was among the many plants that he sent back to Britain. In the early 19th Century, apart from the port of Canton, China was forbidden territory for Europeans and plant collectors were only free to obtain those plants cultivated by the Chinese themselves.

In North America the Cherokee Indians came to use the vines for basketry.

The leaves have been used in Africa to make a tea.

Stems and flower buds have been used in Chinese medicine for hundreds of years. They are mentioned in *Tang Materia Medica* that dates back to 659.