

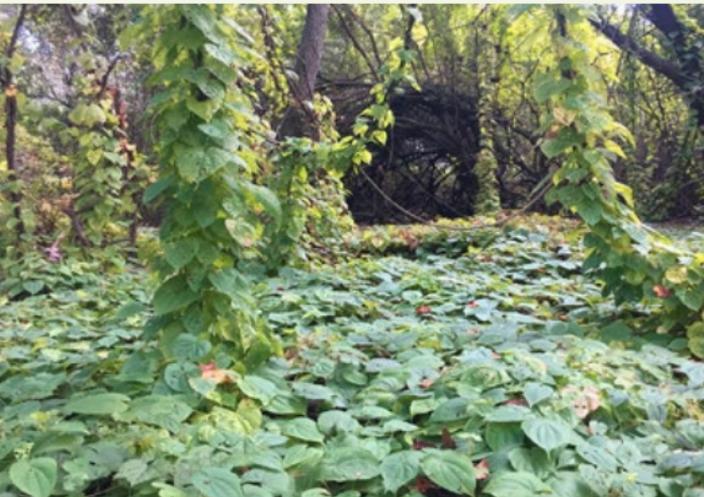
Invasive Air Potato

Dioscorea bulbifera



Unlike the name suggests, an *Air Potato* is not a potato at all, but an invasive, inedible yam.

It was introduced to Florida in 1905 as a medicinal plant and now is found in nearly every county in Florida, including Pinellas. Air Potato vines can grow an incredible eight inches a day, quickly covering and shading out trees, bushes and smaller plants.



Air Potato can quickly engulf native vegetation, climbing high into mature tree canopies.

Air Potato is native to Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

NEGATIVE IMPACTS

- **Kills native plants** by quickly overtaking and smothering them
- **Reduces biodiversity** by shading out native understory vegetation that wildlife depends on



For more information, call **(727) 464-7503**
or visit **www.pinellascounty.org/vegetation**

INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES

Air Potato



DESCRIPTION

Air Potato is a green vine that grows from May to fall/early winter, when it dies back. The leaves are large and heart-shaped, and the plant twines up bushes, trees and structures. Air potato rarely flowers in Florida. Instead, it reproduces through bulbils – brown, sometimes warty, tubers that grow on the vine during the summer and fall to the ground in the winter. These potato-like bulbils sprout new plants in the spring.



An Air Potato bulbil.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ! Remove Air Potato vines in your yard**
Cut the vines at the base. If you are not using an herbicide, it may take several rounds until it dies. Make sure to collect any bulbils, securely bag them and dispose in the trash.
- ! Replace it with a Florida-friendly or native vine**
Coral Honeysuckle, Jacquemontia and Cross Vine are some alternative native planting choices.
- ! Collect and dispose of bulbils every fall**
Bulbils sprout new vines. By removing as many as you can find, fewer plants will continue to grow. Securely bag and dispose of them in the trash. Be on the lookout for Air Potato Bulbil Round-Up events around the county to help in natural areas! ■