

Invasive yam look alike

Invasive yams (*Dioscorea oppositifolia* and *D. polystachya*) may be confused with wild yam, greenbriars, and other herbaceous vines with heart-shaped to arrowhead-shaped leaves.

Name	Stems	Leaves	Flowers	Fruit
Indian + Chinese yam (<i>Dioscorea oppositifolia</i> + <i>D. polystachya</i>)	Twines counterclockwise; aerial bulbils in leaf axils ; underground tubers	Opposite, may be alternate or whorled in upper nodes; spear to oval or heart shaped with sharp tip; 7-9 veins radiating from base of leaf (palmate veins)	Greenish white flowers on spikes in leaf axils; 3 petals + 3 sepals; cinnamon fragrance	Winged seeds
Wild yam (<i>Dioscorea villosa</i>)	Twines clockwise; grooved or narrowly winged; lack tendrils; no bulbils ; underground rhizomes	Mostly alternate, may be whorled; heart shaped; 7-11 veins radiating from base of leaf (palmate veins); leaf edges may be wavy; short hairs on lower surface	Dangling clusters of tiny yellowish to greenish white flowers; 3 petals + 3 sepals	3-winged capsule
Greenbriars (<i>Smilax</i> species)	No bulbils ; usually tendrils from base of leaves	Ovate to shallow heart-shaped leaves; palmate veins	Round umbels of flowers	Dark blue berries in round clusters
Morning glories (<i>Ipomoea</i> spp.), Bindweeds (<i>Calystegia</i> spp. + <i>Convolvulus</i> spp.), Buckwheat (<i>Fagopyrum esculentum</i>) + others			Leaves heart-shaped to arrowhead shaped; pinnate veins . Flowers/fruits variable. No bulbils.	



Invasive yam (L) and wild yam (R) have palmately veined leaves, in which veins originate from the same point at the base of the leaf.

Morning glories and other yam look alike have pinnately veined leaves, in which the veins branch off multiple points along the mid rib.