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| 1 | Leaves mostly fiddle-shaped, with the basal lobes enlarged and deeply cordate and the tip acuminate; plants with elongate, vertical tubers, also producing aerial tubers in the leaf axils | 1 <i>Dioscorea oppositifolia</i> |
| + | Leaves heart-shaped; plants with horizontal rhizomes, not producing axillary, aerial tubers | (2) |
| 2 (1) | Lowermost leaves whorled; rhizomes 10–15 mm in diameter, contorted and with many knobs or short side-branches | 2 <i>Dioscorea quaternata</i> |
| + | Lowermost leaves usually alternate, rarely opposite or whorled; rhizomes 5–10 mm in diameter, relatively straight, smooth and with few or no knobs or short side-branches | 3 <i>Dioscorea villosa</i> |