

# Invasive Species Alert

## Tree of Heaven

Also Chinese sumac or stinking sumac  
(*Ailanthus altissima*)

\*Detected in Michigan\*

### Identification:

- Fast growing deciduous tree reaches up to 70 feet
- Bark is smooth, spotted and pale gray to brown
- Leaves are 1-3 feet long, comprised of 11-25 long, narrow leaflets resembling native sumac
- Leaflets have one or more rounded teeth near the base
- Small, yellowish-green flowers form large, upright clusters in June
- Fruits are flat, twisted, winged seeds
- Flowers and leaves have an unpleasant, rotten peanut butter odor



Chuck Barger, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org



Steve Hurst, USDA NRCS Plants Database,  
Bugwood.org

**Habitat:** Tolerant of poor soils and drought but requiring some sun, tree of heaven can be found in old fields, forest edges and openings, and in urban environments where it was used in landscaping.

**Native Range:** Northeastern and Central China and Taiwan

**U.S. Distribution:** Widespread throughout most of the U.S.

**Local Concern:** Root shoots can develop into dense thickets. Roots can damage sewers and structures. Roots also produce chemicals that inhibit the growth of other plants.

**Look-Alikes:** compound-leaved shrubs and trees like staghorn sumac, ash, black walnut and hickory. Sumac has fuzzy, reddish-brown stems and leaves; ash species have opposite leaves; ash, black walnut, hickory and sumac leaf margins are toothed.

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