

Invasive Species Alert

BLACK LOCUST

(ROBINIA PSEUDOACACIA)

ESTABLISHED IN MICHIGAN

IDENTIFICATION:

- Fast-growing tree that grows 40-100 feet high.
- Compound leaves have seven to 21 oval leaflets that are dark green on top and light green beneath.
- Fragrant, white flowers hang in elongated clusters, blooming in May and June.
- Black locust seed pods are flat, brown and 3 to 4 inches in length.
- Twigs have ½ inch, paired thorns.

HABITAT: This early-successional tree prefers sun and well-drained soils but will populate poor soils and disturbed areas including roadsides, open fields and forest openings.

NATIVE RANGE: Southeastern United States; on the lower slopes of the Appalachian Mountains, small populations along the slopes and forest edges of southern Illinois, Indiana and Missouri.



U.S. DISTRIBUTION: Has been planted throughout the Midwest, West Coast and Texas for erosion control, fence posts and fixing nitrogen in the soil.

MICHIGAN DISTRIBUTION: Established and widespread in Michigan.

LOCAL CONCERN: Black locust spreads by root suckering and stump sprouting, forming dense colonies that shade prairies and forest openings, harming native vegetation. Black locust leaves, stems, bark and seeds are toxic to horses.

REPORT THIS SPECIES: Visit [MISIN.MSU.edu](https://www.misin.msu.edu) or download the MISIN smartphone app and report it from your phone.

Photos courtesy of Robert Vidéki, Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org (top) and Ohio State Weed Lab, The Ohio State University, Bugwood.org (bottom).