

TREE OF HEAVEN IDENTIFICATION

Tree of heaven, a primary host tree for spotted lanternfly, is also an invasive species in Michigan. Native to China and Taiwan, tree of heaven was first imported into the United States in 1784. Over time, its fast growth made it a popular street and landscape tree across the U.S.

Tree of heaven is considered invasive because it spreads easily by seed and root shoots, often developing dense colonies that prevent the growth of other native vegetation. Tree of heaven can grow in almost any soil condition if sunlight is available and can quickly colonize disturbed areas, forest openings, roadsides and streambanks.



Credit: Richard Garner, Bugwood.org

Identifying tree of heaven:

Large trees reach 80-100 feet; up to six feet in diameter. Bark on mature trees is light brown to gray with a cantaloupe skin texture.



Credit: M. Randall, The Nature Conservancy, Bugwood.org



Credit: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Clusters of small, light-green flowers appear on trees from April to May. Female trees produce one to two-inch long, green to pink samaras, or winged seeds, from August to October. Each samara contains one seed.



Credit: Robert Videcki, Doronicum Kft. Bugwood.org



Credit: Chuck Barger, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

Leaves are pinnately compound with a central stem with 10 to 40 lance-shaped leaflets growing in pairs. Leaflets are smooth-edged with a small notch on each side close to the base.



Credit: Richard Garner, Bugwood.org



Credit: Chris Evans, Bugwood.org

Tree of heaven looks like black walnut or staghorn sumac, both common trees in Michigan. Leaflets on both of these look-alikes are serrated or toothed along the edges. Tree of heaven can be most easily identified by the notches at the base of each leaflet.

Report suspected spotted lanternfly:

800-292-3939 or www.misin.msu.edu or MDA-Info@michigan.gov

Learn more:

michigan.gov/exoticpests or michigan.gov/spottedlanternfly