

Tree of Heaven

Ailanthus altissima

Identification: This is a fast-growing deciduous tree often confused with sumac, walnut, or pecan trees. Crushed leaves have an unpleasant odor, which smells something like burnt peanut butter. Each compound leaf is about one to four feet long with 11 to 41 leaflets.



KEY TRAIT: When leaves fall off, they leave behind a scar on the stem that resembles a narrow heart-shape or horseshoe.

Impact: Tree roots quickly send up new sprouts, forming a dense colony of trees within only a few years. Tree of heaven is resistant to pollutants and acidic soils, and also releases chemicals that inhibit the growth of neighboring plants and seedlings.

Removal: Do not simply cut trees: trunks and roots can resprout and produce even more trees!

For small trees, carefully remove entire plant—shoot and root—by hand.

For larger trees:

- notch trunks with an axe and immediately apply a systemic herbicide, such as glyphosate
- cut down trees, remove cut portion, and apply herbicide to stump during summer



Replacement:

Yellowwood

Pecan

Sitka Mountain Ash

Greene's Mountain Ash

Redbud

Cladrastis kentukea

Carya illinoensis

Sorbus sitchensis

Sorbus scopulina

Cercis canadensis