

## SPECIES NAME: TREE OF HEAVEN

INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT

(*Ailanthus alisma*)



PHOTO: University of Tennessee Herbarium, Knoxville

**LEAVES:** Each leaflet has one or a few rounded teeth near its base, and a thickened, round gland on the underside of each tooth.



PHOTO: E. Kiviat

**BARK:** Gray-ish, cantaloupe textured bark and heart-like bud scar on defoliated twigs

**ABOUT:** Introduced to North America by Horticulturalists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Tree of Heaven is an invasive tree very commonly found growing in urbanized areas and roadsides across the Northeastern United States. This fast-growing, deciduous tree thrives in sunny spots and tolerates a wide range of soils. Tree of Heaven can grow in forest interiors if seeds spread to landscapes experiencing gaps in the canopy such as after logging, hemlock die-off, oak defoliation, flooding, or construction.

Flowering in the spring, these invasive trees are prolific seed producers, developing clumps of orange-pink colored, winged seeds in late summer to fall. Tree of Heaven has an impressive ability to increase local populations by sprouting suckers from their spreading root systems and trunk. This ability to reproduce vegetatively occurs with healthy trees and excessively when trees are cut or damaged.

**IMPACTS:** Tree-of-heaven grows much faster than Adirondack area native trees and can out compete other species for key resources. Even very young, small trees can flower and produce seeds that are dispersed by wind, water, and sometimes animals. Tree of Heaven can also limit the growth of other plants by making soil chemistry uninhabitable for native species. Roots and leaves produce **allelopathic** chemicals that are toxic to other plants, microbes, and rodents. Fast growing, powerful root systems can damage plumbing, walls, and building foundations. In some cases, people can even develop skin rashes when exposed to the tree's sap.

**ALERT!:** Tree of Heaven is one of the preferred host plants for a harmful invasive species emerging in New York State – **Spotted Lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) (SLF)**. These flying insects suck sap from stems, leaves, and trunks of more than 70 different kinds of important agricultural crops grown on fruit trees (apples and peaches) as well as woody vines (grapes and hops).

**IF YOU OBSERVE TREE OF HEAVEN IN YOUR AREA,** please report it using iMapInvasives, a free mapping tool (visit [www.iMapInvasives.org](http://www.iMapInvasives.org) to learn more). **IF TREE OF HEAVEN IS GROWING ON YOUR PROPERTY, APIPP CAN TREAT THIS INVASIVE TREE, WITH NO COST TO YOU!**

Contact our team by emailing [info@ADKinvasives.com](mailto:info@ADKinvasives.com) or calling our office at (518) 576-2082. Visit our website at [www.adkinvasives.com](http://www.adkinvasives.com) to learn more. Thank you!

# SPECIES NAME: TREE OF HEAVEN

**INVASIVE SPECIES ALERT** *(Ailanthus alisma)*

[WWW.ADKINVASIVES.COM](http://WWW.ADKINVASIVES.COM)



PHOTO: USDA Plants Database

**TREE OF HEAVEN FLOWERS:** Clusters of many, small, foul smelling cream-colored flowers in spring. Flower odor described as skunk-like.



PHOTO: CC BY-SA 2.1 es commons.wikimedia.org

**TREE OF HEAVEN SEEDS:** Clusters of many, small, bright orange to pink colored seeds known as “achenes.” Slightly curved achene “wings” turn light-brown as they dry and fall off.



iMapInvasives

**STOP SPOTTED LANTERN FLY:** If you see spotted lanternfly (SLF), report this harmful invasive forest pest using iMapInvasives. Download and start using iMap by visiting:

[www.iMapInvasives.org](http://www.iMapInvasives.org)



PHOTO: Pollinator at English Wikipedia, CC BY-SA 4.0

**ABOVE:** A native Sumac tree's upright, pink flower spike

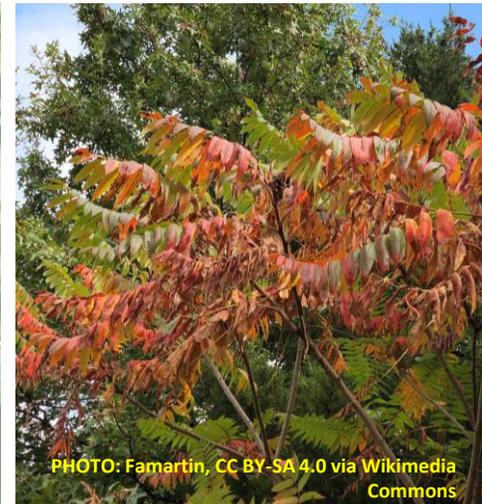


PHOTO: Famartin, CC BY-SA 4.0 via Wikimedia Commons

**ABOVE:** Sumac leaves turning bright orange to red in the Fall.

**NATIVE LOOK ALIKE:** At first glance, many types of **Sumac (*Rhus*)** trees look very similar to Tree of Heaven, but there are some key differences to look out for. Sumacs are small, native trees that are very commonly found growing in sunny areas and along road-sides throughout the Adirondacks. Like Tree of Heaven, Sumacs have long compound leaves made up of many lance-like leaflets. However, Sumac leaves do not have distinctive glands and teeth near the base of each leaflet. Some Sumac varieties have leaflets with serrated edges. Sumac flowers and seeds form dense, upward pointing, densely clustered, pyramidal spikes that range in color from bright pink to brilliant scarlet in color. Sumacs have very bright red fall color as compared to Tree of Heaven, which turn a yellowish green before dropping leaves.