

Tree-of-heaven

Ailanthus altissima (Mill.) Swingle

Life cycle

Fast-growing, weedy tree.

Leaves

Alternate, pinnately compound with 11 to 41 leaflets, approaching 36 inches long. Leaflets are spear-shaped, 2 to 6 inches long, dark green above and pale green below. Leaf margins are smooth except for one to a few coarse teeth near the base; each tooth has a large gland beneath. Damaged leaves emit an unpleasant odor.



Glands on underside of leaflet teeth.



Tree-of-heaven leaf.



Tree-of-heaven sapling.

Tree-of-heaven *continued*

Stems

A small to medium-sized tree, reaching up to 80 feet in height, although 40 feet is more common. Twigs are stout, yellowish to reddish brown and either smooth or downy. Bark is thin, smooth and pale to dark gray. Damaged stems emit an unpleasant odor.

Flowers and fruit

Small, green to yellow flowers are produced in terminal clusters. Fruit are single-seeded, 1.5-inch-long, winged samaras found in crowded clusters.

Reproduction

Seeds and prolific vegetative sprouts.



Tree-of-heaven weedy habit.