



Tree of Heaven
Ailanthus altissima

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TREE OF HEAVEN

Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), also known as stinking sumac or Chinese sumac, is an invasive species native to China, introduced as a decorative shade tree in 1784. A large tree, (up to 100' tall and 6' diameter), it has smooth green bark as a sapling, which turns light brown to gray in maturity, with a diamond-like pattern. Its compound leaves range from 1 to 4 feet long with 10 to 40 leaflets each. Trees are either male or female, with females producing over 300,000 clustered samaras (wing-like seeds) annually. Its flowers have a strong, offensive smell.

Tree of Heaven is drought tolerant, but grows only in full sun, invading such areas as empty lots and forest edges. It inhibits other plants by producing allelopathic chemicals and grows quickly. It spreads through suckers and re-sprouts after being cut, making eradication difficult.