



Tree of Heaven
Ailanthus altissima

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 35 feet

Sunlight: ○ ●

Hardiness Zone: 5a

Description:

One of the all-time great weed trees, capable of seeding itself in the most undesirable of locations; actually quite useful for the toughest of locations, will grow almost anywhere, but use with caution

Ornamental Features

The Tree of Heaven has attractive dark green deciduous foliage which emerges deep purple in spring on a tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. The large pinnately compound leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall colour. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up.

Landscape Attributes

The Tree of Heaven is a deciduous tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This is a high maintenance tree that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy
- Suckering
- Invasive

The Tree of Heaven is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Shade



Tree of Heaven
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Tree of Heaven flowers
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder



Planting & Growing

The Tree of Heaven will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 35 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 7 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.