

PLANT ALERT



Public Gardens as Sentinels against Invasive Plants

Amur corktree

Phellodendron amurense

UPDATED NOVEMBER 2025

Originally issued Sept. 2023

Amur corktree has been identified by the PGSIP working group as a plant of concern due to a growing number of botanic gardens and arboreta reporting its ability to escape from cultivation.

Public gardens across North America are utilizing their horticultural expertise to document cases of plants escaping from cultivation. The goal of this alert is to increase awareness of gardens' observations about Amur corktree's behavior within their properties and to recommend actions to reduce its capacity to spread. For more information visit the [PGSIP website](#).



Todd Jacobson, The Morton Arboretum

Recommended Actions

PGSIP urges these next steps for propagators, nurseries, landscape architects, invasive plant councils, and public gardens.

- Remove fruit-bearing trees
- Eradicate spontaneous populations
- Develop and evaluate cultivars for reduced seed fertility
- Plant and sell only non-fruit bearing trees
- Increase public garden monitoring and reporting

[Public gardens](#)
Sign up for PGSIP here

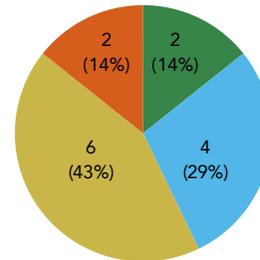
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on this Alert

[Not a public garden?](#)
Share data here

Data from PGSIP Gardens

Fourteen out of 67 gardens have used the PGSIP guidelines to record and rank Amur corktree according to its ability to escape from cultivation. A regional trend is emerging with gardens reporting from the following states and provinces: Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Ontario. More gardens are encouraged to participate to further understand this trend. Click on the map below for current PGSIP records.

How Gardens Ranked Amur corktree



Number and percentage of gardens that assigned each program ranking

[CLICK HERE](#)

Watchlist

[CLICK HERE](#)

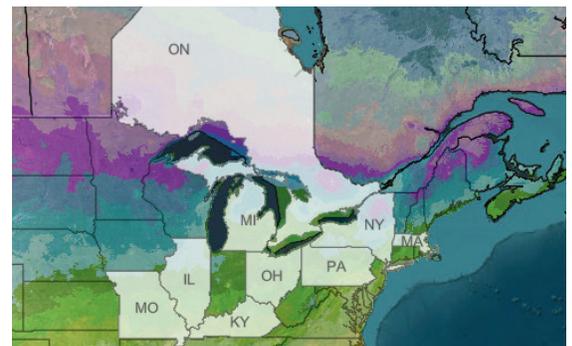
Potentially Invasive

[CLICK HERE](#)

Invasive

[CLICK HERE](#)

Assessed as Invasive



Click map to visit the PGSIP Data Dashboard

Amur corktree *Phellodendron amurense*

Background Information^{1,2,3}

- BRIEF DESCRIPTION:** Tree with short trunk and spreading branches. Thick, corky bark. Fruit 0.25-0.5 in. diameter, green maturing to black.
- HARDINESS ZONES:** 3-7
- NATIVE RANGE:** East Asia
- STATUS:** Regulated in IN, MA, MD, ME, MN, NH, NY, and WI with some exceptions for cultivars
- REDUCED FERTILITY CULTIVAR:** Eyestopper™ and His Majesty™
- POTENTIAL IMPACTS:** Allelopathic, suppresses regeneration of native trees, displaces native shrub and herbaceous layers.



Unique Features²

Amur corktree is similar in appearance to other trees with compound leaves, including tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), yellowwood (*Cladrastis kentukea*), and Kentucky coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioica*). While all of these species have alternately arranged leaves, the leaves of Amur cork tree are opposite. The yellow inner bark is also unique to Amur corktree. When crushed, the leaves have a turpentine-like aroma.



Habitat²

Amur corktree typically invades disturbed woodland habitats, including roadsides, forest edges, woodlots, unmanaged areas, and forest openings. Its shade tolerance allows it to grow in mature upland and lowland forests if seed is introduced.

Reproduction and Growth Rate⁴

Amur corktree seeds are spread over long distances by birds that eat the fruit. Though primarily considered dioecious, trees considered staminate have been observed sporadically producing fruit at some gardens, sometimes only on isolated branches. Describing Amur corktree as polygamodioecious may more accurately reflect its reproductive biology and have important implications about the regulation of corktree cultivars.



References and Links

- 1 - [Woody Invasives of the Great Lakes Collaborative](#)
- 2 - [The Morton Arboretum](#)
- 3 - [EDDMapS](#)
- 4 - [Public Gardens as Sentinels against Invasive Plants](#)

