

New Plant Invaders to Watch For

Princess-tree

(Paulownia tomentosa)

The Threat: Princess-tree is a small to medium sized deciduous tree that can grow 30 to 60 feet tall. It has been planted as an ornamental but has been found to escape and colonize natural areas. Seeds are spread by wind and water. It's ability to sprout from buds on stems and roots enhance its ability to survive, spread, and out-compete native plant species. Massachusetts is near the northern limit for winter hardiness of princess-tree and projected climate warming may allow this species to proliferate here.



Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org UGA2307020

Large (up to 12 or more inches long) heart-shaped, broadly oval, or slightly lobed leaves are arranged in pairs along the stem. The underside of the leaves are hairy.

Flowers are pale violet or whitish, tubular with five petals, and open in the spring.



Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, Univer- UGA5273051

What to do : Learn to recognize the distinguishing features of princess-tree shown in the images on this page. If found, immediately report the finding to Lou Wagner, Mass Audubon Regional Scientist, at 978-927-1122 Extension 2705, or lwagner@massaudubon.org.



Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org UGA2307023

Fruits occur in 1 to 2 inch long clusters. The fruits distinguish princess tree from Catalpa, which has similar leaves but long, slender, bean-like fruits.



Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

Twigs are glossy gray-brown with numerous white dots (lenticels).

Fruits turn brown and persist through winter, opening in late winter to release many small winged seeds.

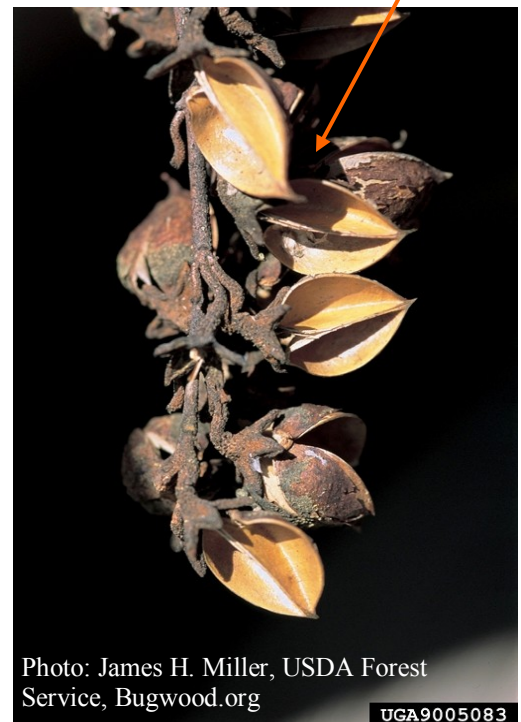


Photo: James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org UGA9005083