

Invasive Plants in Pennsylvania

Amur maple

Acer ginnala



Paul Wray, Iowa State Univ.

Background:

Amur maple is a native of central and northern China, Manchuria and Japan, and was introduced into the United States in the 1860s. It is still being sold commercially for ornamental use as well as for wildlife and shelterbelt plantings.

Range:

In the United States this tree ranges from Maine to North Dakota and as far south as Kentucky. It is considered invasive across most of its U.S. range.

Description:

Amur maple is a small tree that grows up to 20 feet high with a broad crown, but sometimes pruned as a hedge. Twigs are smooth and light colored. Leaves are opposite, longer than they are wide, and have three shallow lobes and double-toothed edges. Fall leaf color is a brilliant red. Fragrant flowers appear in loose clusters in May and June. Fruit are numerous reddish, two-winged, inch long samaras that mature in late summer and persist on the tree until late fall.

How to Control this Species:

Mechanical control

Prescribed fire will set back Amur maple, but not eliminate it. Small infestations can be controlled by grubbing out individual plants.

Chemical Control

These trees can be controlled using a cut-stump treatment with glyphosate herbicide or the cut-stump or basal bark treatment around the trunk with triclopyr herbicide.

Biology and Spread:

Amur maple spreads primarily through wind-dispersal of abundant winged samaras in late summer and fall.



Leslie Mehrhoff, Univ. of Connecticut

Habitat:

Often found in early successional forests, forest edges, open disturbed areas, roadsides and as planted ornamentals in yards and gardens. Amur maple tolerates a wide range of soils and pH values. It grows best on moist-well drained soils.

Look-A-Likes

Amur maple is most easily mistaken for a small red maple (*Acer rubrum*). The terminal leaf lobes in Amur maple tend to be more elongate. The undersurface of Amur maple leaves are light green, while red maple tends to have a much paler light color. Amur maple flowers are white and fragrant, while red maple flowers are non-fragrant and red. Amur maple samaras have nearly parallel wings and persist into late fall, while red maple samaras have more angled wings and tend not to persist.



Stacey Leicht, Univ. of Connecticut

Ecological Threat:

Amur maple can displace native shrubs and understory trees in open woods, and shades out native grasses and herbaceous plants in more open habitats. This plant has been widely planted for its hardiness and tolerates a wide range of hardiness zones (zones three through eight).