

## Tree of Heaven

**Description:** Tree-of-heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), commonly referred to as ailanthus, is a rapidly growing deciduous tree native to both northeast and central China, as well as Taiwan.

**Size:** Tree-of-heaven has rapid growth and can grow into a large tree, reaching heights of 80 feet and up to 6 feet in diameter.

**Bark:** The bark of tree-of-heaven is smooth and brownish-green when young, eventually turning light brown to gray, resembling the skin of a cantaloupe.

**Leaves:** Tree-of-heaven leaves are pinnately compound, meaning they have a central stem in which leaflets are attached on each side. One leaf can range in length from 1 to 4 feet with anywhere from 10 to 40 leaflets. The leaflets are lance-shaped with **smooth or "entire" margins**. **At the base of each leaflet are one to two protruding bumps called glandular teeth**. When crushed, the leaves and all plant parts give off a **strong, offensive odor**.

**Twigs:** The twigs of tree-of-heaven are alternate on the tree, stout, greenish to brown in color, and lack a terminal bud. They have large **V- or heart-shaped leaf scars** when broken off. The twigs easily break to expose the large, spongy, brown center, or pith.



