



Invasive Plant Alert¹

Pagoda Tree

Styphnolobium japonicum (L.)
Schott
(previously *Sophora japonica*)

Where to Look

The Pagoda tree is capable of growing in all soil types, although it grows best in well drained, loamy soils and in full sun conditions. It is resistant to pests, drought, and pollution. It is hardy to -25°F (31.7°C).

This species is native to eastern Asia, China, and Korea but has been introduced as an ornamental in North America, Japan, Europe, North America, and South Africa. It has become invasive in DC, Maryland, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.



Figure 1 Leaves. Dr. Mark Brand, UCONN

Identifying the Plant

S. japonicum is a fast growing deciduous tree that will reach a height and width of about 30-60 ft. (10-20m).

It produces white flowers in late summer (usually August) and has mature fruits in late autumn (usually November). The flowers are hermaphroditic, with 5 papilionaceous (butterfly-like) petals 4-5 mm

long. They are arranged in terminal panicles with 10 stamens, an elongate pistil and superior ovary.



Figure 2 Pagoda Tree. Robert Vidéki, Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org

The tree is deciduous and characterized by having alternate branching with leaves pinnately compound, usually with 6 pairs of petiole, entire leaflets.



Figure 3 Flowers. Dr. Mark Brand, UCONN

Fruits of the Pagoda Tree are hanging pod-like legumes 3-8 cm long. They are a fleshy and yellow to green when young and reddish-brown when mature. There are 2-9 seeds within each pod.

How to get rid of it?

The most effective method for removal of invasive trees is systematic herbicide application (especially in early spring or late fall). Young trees may be cut and the roots dug out. Combination methods of cutting and herbicide systematic herbicide treatment is highly effective.



Figure 4 Pagoda Tree with Mature Fruits. Robert Vidéki, Doronicum Kft., Bugwood.org

Resources

Plants For a Future

<http://www.pfaf.org/user/Plant.aspx?LatinName=Sophora+japonica>

Arboles Y Arbustos (Trees and Shrubs)

http://www.arbolesyarbustos.com/index.php?id_img=1&id=61&lang=en

¹ This species has been identified as a potential or emerging threat to natural areas in the mid-Atlantic region