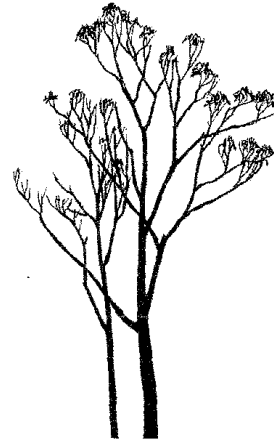
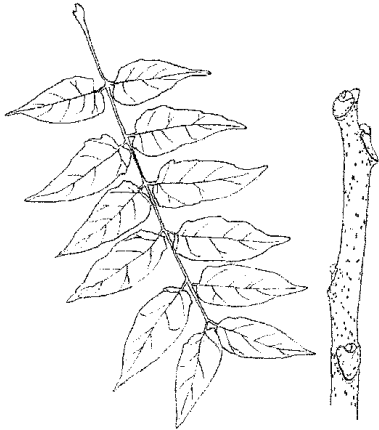


## Tree of Heaven

## *Ailanthus altissima*



**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** The tree from the book *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is basically a 'weed' tree because it does not have an overly pleasant growth form and is extremely invasive due to its high tolerance of pollution, adaptability to a broad range of soil conditions, abundant production of viable seeds and lack of susceptibility to disease. This dioecious tree can grow to moderate heights, is open and upright in form, has a quasi whorled look to some branching patterns and has large pinnately compound leaves with many leaflets and swollen bases to the petiole and very large leaf scars. The bark is gray with vertical streaks.

**HABIT AND SIZE:** 40-60' high and 25-40' wide. Its form is upright-open with spreading branches that are slightly swollen at the base and can originate in a pattern that almost looks whorled. The crown can be slightly rounded. A very fast growing tree.

**LANDSCAPE VALUE:** No real landscape value except the negative of its invasiveness.

**LEAVES:** Alternate, odd-pinnately compound 18-24" long with a swollen base to the petiole. The 13-25 stalked (petiolules 0.25-0.75" long) ciliate leaflets are 3-5" long, oblong or lanceolate, acuminate (pointed at tip) and have 2-4 coarse teeth at the base each with a gland beneath. Bronze-purple young leaves turn dark green on maturity. No significant fall color. The leaves give off a disagreeable odor when bruised.

**FLOWERS:** Both male and female flowers small, greenish and large terminal panicles usually on separate trees. A short 5 parted calyx and a 5-6 parted corolla subtend a 10 lobed disc with 10 stamens in males and a 2-5 parted unilocular ovary.

**FRUIT:** A single seeded oblong samara (1.5" long, 0.5" wide) with a slight twist and yellow-green to orange red coloration.

**BUD:** Small lateral buds with 2 opposite lateral bud scales that are thick and with a reddish-brown downy surface. Leaf scars very large.

**DISEASES AND INSECTS:** No significant disease problems. Some *Verticillium* wilt, shoestring root rot, leaf spots, twig blight and canker infestation.

**HARDINESS AND RANGE:** Zones 4-8. China

**CULTIVARS:** 'Erythrocarpa', female with red samaras and 'Metro' male with handsome Crown.