

# Tried and True Native Plants To Replace Invasive Plants

Best Bets: Plants  
for Particular Uses  
in the Mid-Atlantic

## INVASIVE PLANT: Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*)



Also known as Chinese or Stinking Sumac, this plant was introduced from China in 1784 as a specimen and shade tree. It was commonly found in nurseries by 1840 and has been popular in urban plantings ever since. This rapidly-growing tree has now overwhelmed natural areas in over 30 states and is reported as invasive in both Arlington and Alexandria as well as in many national parks in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC.

Problems	Tree of Heaven & Sourwood
Invades cultivated fields and natural habitats	
Thickets forming from root sprouts displace native vegetation	
Allelopathic, produces chemicals that kill other plants or prevent them from growing nearby	
Seeds prolifically and grows vigorously (10 to 14 feet in first year); root segments can re-sprout	
Causes damage to urban sewers and structures	
Preferred host of Spotted Lanternfly, serious pest of fruit and grape crops and ornamentals	
Crushed leaves smell of rancid peanut butter, distinguishing it from staghorn sumac	
Desired Characteristics	
Medium-size to large tree with interesting foliage	
Native Alternatives	
<i>Carya glabra</i> (Pignut Hickory)	
<i>Carya ovata</i> (Shagbark Hickory)	
<i>Juglans nigra</i> (Black Walnut)	
<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> (Sweetgum)	
<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i> (Sourwood)	
<i>Rhus glabra</i> (Smooth Sumac)	
<i>Rhus typhina</i> (Staghorn Sumac)	
<i>Sassafras albidum</i> (Sassafras)	

Images by Elaine Mills, Rockville and Sunny Demonstration Garden



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