



# Invasive Species Leaflet



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## *Albizia julibrissin* (Mimosa)

### Initial Introduction and Expansion in Range



*Albizia julibrissin* is native to southern and eastern Asia. It is found from Iran, east to China and Korea. The introduction of this plant to the United States has been traced back to 1745. The showy and fragrant pink flowers and attractive fern-like leaves of *A. julibrissin* continue to make this plant a popular choice for ornamental plantings. It is widely spread from New York, west to Missouri and Illinois, south to Florida and across to California.

*Albizia julibrissin* can form dense colonies from root sprouts, but the prolific seeds of this plant pose the greatest threat to natural areas. The seeds are readily dispersed by animals and water and have impermeable seed coats that allow them to remain viable for years.

### Description and Biology

- Fast-growing deciduous tree with a low branching, open, spreading form that reaches heights of 20 to 40 feet.
- Trunks may be single or multiple stems.
- Thin, light bark is nearly smooth with lens shaped areas (lenticels) along the stem.
- Feathery, fern-like leaves are 5 to 8 inches long.
- Appearing from May to July, the fragrant flowers resemble pom-poms with numerous filaments and pink feathery tufts with white bases.
- The flat, straw-colored fruits, or pods, are about 6 inches long, ripen from August to September, and remain on trees into winter.



## Habitats Susceptible to Invasion

Preferring full sun, *A. julibrissin* often spreads along roadsides and escapes into vacant lots in suburban and urban areas. In natural areas this plant poses a particular threat along stream banks since the seeds are easily dispersed in water. *Albizia julibrissin* tolerates a variety of soil types and moisture regimes but is rarely seen in the mountains above 3,000 feet since it is not cold-hardy at these elevations.

## Prevention and Control

Despite its weed potential and susceptibility to disease (mimosa wilt), *A. julibrissin* is still widely planted for ornamental purposes. As news of these problems becomes more widespread, some cities are passing ordinances outlawing the further planting of this species. Regardless of whether there are ordinances in place, responsible property owners and land managers should no longer plant this tree.

Small infestations of young seedlings can be effectively controlled by handpulling. Cut larger trees of *A. julibrissin* before they set seed at or within 6 inches of the ground and immediately apply a 50 percent solution of triclopyr to the cut stump. This method is effective as long as the ground is not frozen.

If cutting down the tree is not practical, girdle the trunk near the base using an ax, hatchet, saw, or chainsaw and immediately apply a 50 percent solution of triclopyr to the wound. Similarly, use an ax or hatchet to make closely spaced and angled downward cuts around the trunk as close to the ground as possible and immediately spray the cuts with the same chemical solution.

As long as the ground is not frozen, *A. julibrissin* can also be killed with a mixture of 25 percent triclopyr and 75 percent mineral oil applied to the basal parts of the trunk to a height of 12 to 15 inches from the ground. This method should be used judiciously since it takes a lot of chemical and can result in overspray. It has been used successfully in situations where no other technique is easy such as cliff faces or other exposed sites.

For large thickets of *A. julibrissin* seedlings, apply a foliar solution of 2 percent glyphosate or triclopyr plus a 0.5 percent non-ionic surfactant to thoroughly wet all of the leaves. The air temperature should be above 65 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure maximum performance of the chemicals.

***THE LABEL IS THE LAW!***

***WHEN USING ANY PESTICIDE, FOLLOW ALL LABEL INSTRUCTIONS***

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*Albizia julibrissin* photography by Cherri Smith, NCDOT.

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