

New Invaders Watch Program

Early Detection and Rapid Response Network

COMMON NAME: **PRINCESS TREE**

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Paulownia tomentosa*

FAMILY: *Scrophulariaceae*

ORIGIN: Western and central China

US INTRODUCTION: Introduced around 1840 as an ornamental and landscape tree

MAJOR PATHWAYS OF SPREAD:

- Distribution and use for ornamental gardens
- Wind
- Water

IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- Small to medium sized tree that may reach 30-60 feet in height, flowers in spring, spreads by seed and vegetatively
- Bark is rough, gray-brown, interlaced with shiny, smooth areas
- Stems are olive-brown to dark brown, hairy and markedly flattened where stems and branches meet
- Leaves opposite, large, broadly oval to heart-shaped, or sometimes shallowly three-lobed, and hairy on the lower leaf surfaces
- Flowers conspicuous and showy in upright clusters, pale violet, and fragrant
- Fruit is a dry brown capsule that contain tiny winged seeds dispersed in autumn, open pods remain attached all winter
- Threatens forests, stream banks, and steep rocky slopes

NATIVE LOOK-ALIKES:

Princess tree can be mistaken for native catalpa tree (*Catalpa speciosa*) because of similar shaped leaves. Unlike princess tree, catalpa have long slender, bean-like seed pods.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Plant Conservation Alliance Factsheet.
<http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/pato1.htm>

Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council.
<http://www.se-eppc.org/manual/princess.html>

US Forest Service.
http://na.fs.fed.us/fhp/invasive_plants/weeds/princess-tree.pdf



Flowers



Seed pods



Tree branch and leaves



Princess tree