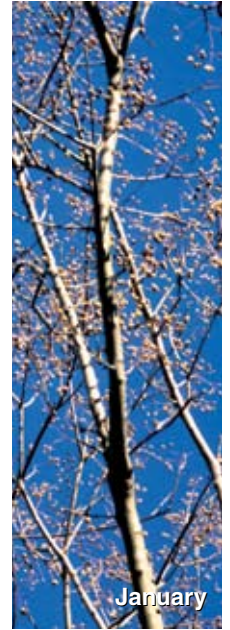


Chinaberrytree

TREES



T. Bodner



***Melia azedarach* L. MEAZ**

Plant. Deciduous tree to 50 feet (15 m) in height and 2 feet (60 cm) in diameter, much branched with multiple boles, lacy dark-green leaves having a musky odor, and clusters of lavender flowers in spring yielding persistent, poisonous yellow berries.

Stem. Twigs stout, glossy greenish-brown with light dots (lenticels). No terminal bud. Numerous broad, V-shaped, raised leaf scars with three bundle scars below a domed fuzzy bud. Bark dark chocolate brown and becoming increasingly fissured with age. Wood soft and white.

Leaves. Alternately whorled, bipinnately compound, 1 to 2 feet (30 to 60 cm) long and 9 to 16 inches (23 to 40 cm) wide. Leafstalk lime green with base slightly clasping stem. Each leaflet lanceolate with tapering tips, 1 to 3 inches (2.5 to 8 cm) long and 0.5 to 1.2 inches (1 to 3 cm) wide. Margins varying from entire to coarsely crenate to serrate and wavy. Glossy dark green with light-green midvein above and pale green with lighter-green midvein beneath, becoming golden yellow in fall.

Flowers. March to May. Showy panicles from lower axils of new stems. Five pinkish-lavender to whitish petals, stamens united in dark-purple tube. Five green sepals. Fragrant.

Fruit and seeds. July to January. Berrylike spherical drupe 0.5 to 0.7 inch (1.2 to 1.8 cm) wide persisting through winter and containing a stone with one to six seeds. Light green turning yellowish green then yellowish tan. Poisonous to humans and livestock.

Ecology. Common on roadsides, at forest margins, and around old homesites but rare at high elevations. Semishade tolerant. Forms colonies from root sprouts or sprouts from root collars, and spreads by bird-dispersed abundant seeds.

Resembles common elderberry, *Sambucus canadensis* L., a spreading crowned shrub with once pinnately compound leaves, margins finely serrate, and green to dark-purple berries in flat-topped clusters.

History and use. Introduced in the mid-1800s from Asia. Widely planted as a traditional ornamental around homesites. Extracts potentially useful for natural pesticides.

States with suspected infestations are shown in gray.

**Chinaberrytree****0993**

June

November