

Invasive Species Profile: Chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*)

Identifying Characteristics

Deciduous tree growing to 50 feet tall. Multi-branched with dark, chocolate brown bark that becomes increasingly fissured with age. White lenticels (dots) on glossy brown stems. Leaves are alternate, two to three times compound, and grow up to 1 1/2 feet long. Leaflets are dark green and lacy. Small lilac flowers. Round fruits are yellow-green and hang in clusters; ripen in late summer.



Bark and leaves are poisonous to domestic animals and livestock. Fruits are poisonous to humans and some mammals, including livestock.



Habitat

Found primarily in disturbed areas such as roadsides and fencerows, but has also been found in marshes and upland woods. Most abundant in north and west Florida, but found as far south as the Keys.

Growth Habits

Spreads by seed drop and dispersal by birds. Sprouts from root collars, forming colonies from root sprouts. Shades out native vegetation.

Control Methods --- Cut-Stump or Basal Bark

Cut larger trees, and treat the stump immediately with triclopyr ester. Basal bark applications are also effective. Roots are very deep and often difficult to pull. Revisit site periodically to pull seedlings.

Florida-Friendly Replacements:

- Laurel oak (*Quercus laurifolia*)
- Bluejack oak (*Quercus incana*)
- Flatwoods plum (*Prunus umbellata*)
- Chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolia*)
- Red mulberry (*Morus rubra*)