



Tree-of-Heaven Identification Guide

Leaves: Pinnately compound with 11-41 leaflets, alternate leaves, 1-3 feet long, with smooth leaf margins (no serrations). When crushed, the leaves smell offensive, with some describing it as burnt peanut butter.

Note the bumps, or glands, that are at the base of the leaflets.



Close-up of the bumps on the base of the leaflets



Tree-of-heaven leaf

Bark: Mature bark is light brown to gray with streaks, resembling the skin of a cantaloupe.

The stems of smaller trees will be smooth and green.

Flowers and Seeds: Tree-of-heaven will have white flowers from late May through June.

The flowers on female trees will develop into yellow to orange seeds in the summer.



Mature bark



Tree-of-heaven seeds (samaras)



Tree-of-heaven flowers

Tree-of-Heaven Lookalikes

Sumac: Look for serrated leaflet edges and upright, red, panicles (flowers).

Staghorn sumac, a common species, has fuzzy stems.

Sumac is shorter than tree-of-heaven, growing from 3-30 ft, rather than 80-100 ft.



Sumac leaf (note serrations)

Kuse Nature Preserve



Staghorn sumac leaves and panicles

UMass Amherst Extension

Black Walnut: Mature bark is very course with deep ridges and furrows.

Later in the summer you will see round green walnuts.

Leaflets are shorter and have very fine serrations around their edges.



Black walnut bark

Alex Zorach



Black walnut leaf

Oklahoma State University Extension

Poison Sumac: An uncommon plant in Connecticut, only found in wet areas.

Look for white berries and smaller leaves than tree-of-heaven. Leaflets have smooth edges.

Poison sumac may cause a rash when touched.



Poison sumac with white berries

KPC News