

**PLANT:** Chinaberry tree (*Melia azedarach*) is also known as Persian lilac and chinaberry. It is native to India, Pakistan, and western China and was imported to the United States in the early 1800's.

**IDENTIFICATION:** Chinaberry tree is deciduous and grows up to 50 feet in height and 2 feet in diameter. It is multi branched with multiple boles, has lacy dark green leaves with a musky odor, and dark brown bark that becomes increasingly fissured with age. The tree has clusters of lavender flowers in spring and produces persistent, yellow berries which are poisonous. The twigs are stout and glossy, with light dots (lenticels). The wood is soft and white. Its leaves are alternate spiraled, bipinnately compound, and 1 to 2 feet in length and 9 to 16 inches in width. Leaves are glossy dark green with a lighter midvein and are lanceolate in shape. The leaves turn bright yellow during the fall.

**ECOLOGY:** Chinaberry tree is commonly found on roadsides, fencerows, at forest margins, and around old home sites. It is rare at higher elevations. It is moderately shade and flood tolerant. It occurs in a wide variety of locations, from swampy marshes to dry uplands. It will start producing viable seed around 4 to 5 years old. It also forms colonies from root sprouts, sprouts from root collars, and seedlings. The seed spreads by animal dispersal, especially by birds. Seedling germination is suppressed under mature trees, but seeds will germinate following parent tree removal.

**HERBICIDE CONTROL:** For treating trees use dilutions and cut-spacing specified on the herbicide label make stem injections using Arsenal AC or Pathway, or when safety of surrounding vegetation is desired, Garlon 3A. Do not use tree injection during March or April. If cutting and treating stumps, treat the stump immediately after cutting. If relying on retail garden store herbicides to treat cut stumps, use undiluted ORTHO Brush-B-Gon, Enforcer Brush Killer, or Vine-X, and treat immediately after cut. For treatment of saplings, basal treat with Garlon 4 as a 10-20% solution (2 to 5 pints per 3-gallon mix) with a surfactant and penetrant. For sprouts and seedlings, treat with Garlon 3A or 4 in a 2% solution when safety of surrounding plants in necessary. Thoroughly wet all leaves with the herbicide and surfactant.

**WARNING:** The active ingredient imazapyr and hexazinone can injure or kill plants with roots in the affected area. Always read and follow label directions carefully.

Source: (A Field Guide for the Identification of, A Management Guide for) Invasive Plants in Southern Forests, James H. Miller, USDA Forest Service, 2010. Photo Credit: Chuck Barger, The University of Georgia, [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)



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