

Plant Profiles: HORT 2241 Landscape Plants I

Botanical Name: *Phellodendron amurense*

Common Name: Amur corktree

Family Name: Rutaceae – rue or citrus family

General Description: *Phellodendron amurense* is a medium to large shade tree with a broad spreading habit and beautiful cork-like bark. It is tolerant of a wide range of soil types, transplants easily, does best in full sun and is considered pollution tolerant. However, it has not performed as well in urban conditions as once thought and is too large and broad spreading for street tree use. *Phellodendron amurense* is dioecious. The fruit on female trees can be messy and set seedlings. Native to Northern China, Manchuria and Japan, it has become an invasive species in northeastern United States and is on the invasive species list in DuPage County, Illinois. For this reason, male cultivars are selected for use in the landscape.

Zone: 3-7

Resources Consulted:

Dirr, Michael A. *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses*. Champaign: Stipes, 2009. Print.

"The PLANTS Database." *USDA, NRCS*. National Plant Data Team, Greensboro, NC 27401-4901 USA, 2014. Web. 23 Mar. 2014.

Swink, Floyd, and Gerould Wilhelm. *Plants of the Chicago Region*. Indianapolis: Indiana Academy of Science, 1994. Print.

Creator: Julia Fitzpatrick-Cooper, Professor, College of DuPage

Creation Date: 2014

Keywords/Tags: *Phellodendron amurense*, Amur corktree, tree, deciduous



Whole plant/Habit:

- Description: Amur corktree is a majestic short trunked, thick barked, broad spreading tree.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 6, 2012
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_4821.png



Bark:

- Description: The mature bark is ash gray and deeply ridged and furrowed creating a corklike bark. Hence, the name corktree. The bark is an excellent identification feature.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 6, 2012
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_4815.png



Bark:

- Description: Even the large lower branches will have deep, corky bark.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 6, 2012
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_4868.png



Branch/Twig:

- Description: The stems of Amur corktree are stout with prominent lenticels. The young stems are light tan-gray. Notice the "horseshoe" shaped leaf scar with the bud sitting down inside the "horseshoe".
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: April 24, 2011
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_1290068.png



Branch/Twig:

- Description: The older stems turn brown. Notice the thickened base of the petiole (frequently called a rachis on a compound leaf) enclosing the bud.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: August 29, 2008
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_3181.png



Bud:

- Description: Notice that the petiole encloses but does not completely surround the bud. This creates a "horseshoe" shaped leaf scar.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 6, 2012
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_4863.png



Bud:

- Description: The buds are silky, reddish brown, and nestled into the "horseshoe" of the leaf scar. All aspects of the bud, leaf scar and stout stem qualities aid in identification.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: November 28, 2008
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_1080951.png



Fruit:

- Description: Amur corktree is dioecious, meaning some plants produce only female flowers and some produce only male flowers. Fruits will only form on female plants. The drupes are about the size of a blueberry, turning black when mature in fall. They have a disagreeable odor when bruised and can stain sidewalks and other surfaces. Male clones are preferred for use in the landscape to avoid this and to avoid seedling growth.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: September 6, 2012
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_4832.png



Leaf:

- Description: The leaves of Amur corktree are opposite, pinnately compound, and 10-15 inches long. Leaves are a rich dark green during the growing season. Fall color is yellow.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: August 29, 2008
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_3179.png



Winter interest:

- Description: The broad habit and stout branching creates a unique winter silhouette. The large lower branches are broad spreading with the characteristic thick corky bark. The perfect tree to climb!
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: November 28, 2008
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_1080948.png



Special ID feature(s):

- Description: There are so many easy identification features on this plant – bud, leaf scar, and habit to name a few. However, the most distinctive feature is the deeply ridged and furrowed corky bark.
- Image Source: Karren Wcisel, TreeTopics.com
- Image Date: August 29, 2008
- Image File Name: amur_cork_tree_3173.png