

Melia azedarach

Chinaberry, pride of India, 'inia

Melia azedarach L.

Family: Meliaceae

Description: Branched deciduous tree to 60 ft tall. Bark reddish brown, furrowed on older trees. Leaves bipinnately compound, 7–20 inches long, 3–5 divisions, each with 3–5 leaflets, ovate, 3 inches long, margins serrate. Floral panicles emerge at the axils in March–June. Flowers small, lavender. Fruit clusters appear in late summer through fall, fruit 0.8 inches in diameter, yellow, persist after leaf fall, 4–8 celled, 1–2 seeds per cell, used medicinally, reportedly poisonous⁽⁷⁰⁾. Related to the neem tree, *Azadirachta indica* A. Juss. Fruit, leaves used as mothballs to protect clothing and books from insects⁽⁵⁹⁾. *Melia* from the Greek name for ash because of the similarity of their leaves⁽⁷⁰⁾; *azedarach* an aboriginal name for this plant⁽¹⁷⁾.



Distribution: Native to SE Asia. Naturalized between Florida, Texas, Oklahoma, and Virginia^(17, 38). Widespread throughout South Africa⁽²²⁾. In Hawai'i, occurs in dry to moist forests on all inhabited islands except Moloka'i. Introduced around 1840. Widely planted ornamental⁽⁷⁰⁾.

Environmental impact: Naturalized in drier pastures and gulches. Fruit not toxic to cattle and birds but toxic to poultry, pigs, and humans⁽⁵⁹⁾; however, the toxic principle is unknown⁽⁷⁵⁾. Displaces natives in disturbed natural areas.

Management: Triclopyr ester, 10% product in oil applied to basal bark, or triclopyr amine applied to cut surface provided excellent control; foliar application of triclopyr amine

1% product in high-volume spray provided good control⁽³⁰⁾. Browsed by cattle.

