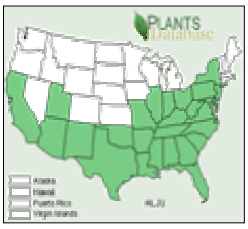
Silk Tree

Albizia julibrissin Durz.

Common Names:
Mimosa and Silky Acacia

DESCRIPTION: Silk tree is a small to medium-sized tree in the pea family (Fabaceae) that can grow up to 20-40 feet tall. The bark is light brown, nearly smooth, and generally thin with lens shaped areas along the stem. The attractive fern-like leaves of mimosa are finely divided, 5-8 inches long by about 3-4 inches wide, and alternate along the stems. Silk tree has showy and fragrant pink flowers, about 1½ inches long, that resemble pom-poms and are arranged in panicles at the ends of branches. Fruits are flat, straw-colored pods about 6 inches long containing light brown oval-shaped seeds about ½ inch in length. Pods ripen in August to September and begin to disintegrate soon after, but remain on the trees into winter. Silk tree reproduces both vegetatively and by seed

ECOLOGICAL THREAT: It is a strong competitor to native trees and shrubs in open areas or forest edges. Dense stands severely reduce the sunlight and nutrients available for other plants. It is considered an invasive species.



DISTRIBUTION: The native range is from Iran to Japan. In the United States, it is naturalized in states colored green on the distribution map.

HABITAT: Silk tree can grow in a variety of soils, prefers full sun and is often seen along roadsides and open vacant lots in urban/suburban areas. It can tolerate partial shade but is seldom found in forests with full canopy cover, or at higher elevations (above 900 m or 3,000 ft), where cold hardiness is a limiting factor. It can become a serious problem along riparian areas.

MANAGEMENT OPTIONS: Silk tree can be controlled using a variety of mechanical and chemical controls. **Cutting** is an initial control measure and will require either an herbicidal control or repeated cutting for resprouts. **Girdling** is effective on large trees where the use of herbicides is impractical. **Hand pulling** will effectively control young seedlings. **Systemic herbicides** such as glyphosate and triclopyr can kill the entire plant. (See detailed management at - http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/fact/alju1.htm)

References: http://plants.usda.gov. www.nps.gov/plants