

**Japanese angelica tree (*Aralia elata*)**

**Also called:** Japanese aralia

**Family name:** Aralia (Araliaceae)

**Native range:** Asia

**NJ Status:** Emerging Stage 3 – Common (may be regionally abundant). It is *highly threatening* to natural communities. Eradicate newly emerging occurrences only.

**General description:**

- Deciduous tree or shrub, to 40' tall
- Colonial, thicket forming
- Irregular form—spreading, multi- or single-stemmed
- Bark covered in sharp prickles

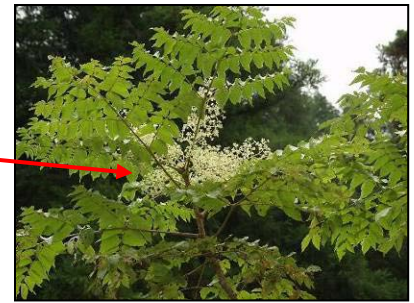


**Leaves:**

- Alternate, 2 or 3 times pinnately compound
- Toothed or nearly toothless with downy hairs below
- Leaflets variable, 2"-4.75" long
- Large, entire leaf 2'-4' feet long
- Leaves turn yellow to reddish purple in fall
- Spines at leaf axils
- Main leaf veins extend to leaf edge
- Leaflet typically with sessile or with very short petiole (stem)



Japanese angelica flowers overtopped by foliage



**Fruit:**

- Small purple to black berries in circular formations
- Appearing August-September; ripening from September -October



**Habitat:**

- Forest, shrubland, meadow, and landscaping

**Commercial availability:** Yes

**Look-alikes:**

**Devil's Walking Stick (*Aralia spinosa*)**

- Small native tree or shrub
- Inflorescence longer, 3'-3.5' with a distinct central stalk
- Typically taller than wide, usually above foliage
- Main leaf veins branch and diminish at leaf margin
- Leaflets variable, 2"-2.75" long
- Typically with short, but distinct petiole
- Typically southern, extends into PA, DE

Devil's walking stick flowers overtopping foliage



**Flowers:**

- Whitish to cream colored
- Borne in large, inflorescence 12"-24" long
- Clusters multi-stemmed, lacking a central axis
- Often wider than tall, with flower base surrounded or overtopped by foliage
- Blooms late July-August

**Toothache tree, common prickly ash (*Zanthoxylum americanum*)**

- Small native tree or shrub
- Prickles paired along stem
- Compound leaves
- Blooms in spring, before leaf out

Toothache tree fruit and once-compound leaves

