



Invasive Species of the Month for July 2018

Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*)

Origin: China

Interesting Fact: Mimosa was introduced to the US a long time ago; experts think around 1745 to be exact. It is still frequently sold as an ornamental tree with different cultivars based on the foliage color.

Description: Mimosa is a woody perennial tree in the Legume Family that can grow up to 50 ft. tall. It has alternate, bipinnately compound leaves and pink, puffy flowers that bloom in early to mid summer.

Defining characteristics:

- Alternate, bipinnately compound leaves of ranging from 20 to 60 pinnula per pinna.
- Terminal clusters of pinkish, puffball-like flowers
- Flat, brown-colored seed pods
- Thin, smooth-ish bark
- Decurrent growth habit

Botanical Terminology:

Bipinnate – twice divided leaves

Decurrent – spreading form

Pinnae – the first division in a bipinnately compound leaf

Pinnule – the secondary division in a bipinnately compound leaf, i.e. smallest leaflet



Left Image: Mimosa's alternately, bipinnately compound leaves

Center Image: Pink flowers of Mimosa.

Right Image: Smooth-ish bark of Mimosa.

Habitat: Woodland edges, ditches, stream banks, fallow fields, roadsides, and other disturbed areas



Above Image: Roadside invasion of Mimosa in Knox County.

Ecological threat: Mimosa can reproduce via seed and vegetatively through new sprouts, especially after being cut. One study showed a Mimosa tree could produce approximately 8,000 seeds/year. In addition, Mimosa is a nitrogen fixer, giving it another competitive advantage over other plants, especially in degraded habitats. Dense patches of Mimosas can shade out native vegetation.

Control Methods:

- **Manual:** Pulling can work on small seedlings but care must be taken to ensure all of the roots are removed. Larger trees can be controlled by girdling but may need follow up cutting or chemical control.
- **Chemical:** Large trees cut be cut stump treated with glyphosate* or basal bark treated with triclopyr*. Patches of small Mimosas can be treated with a foliar application of glyphosate or triclopyr plus a non-ionic surfactant*.

*Always follow herbicide label instructions.

References

Meyer, Rachele. 2010. Albizia julibrissin. In: Fire Effects Information System, [Online]. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory (Producer). Available: <https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/tree/albjul/all.html> [2018, July 7].

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