

# November Weed of the Month: Amur Corktree

A single female tree can produce thousands of seeds, and the trees can outcompete native species

Emilie Justen,  
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In January, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) added Amur corktree (Phellodendron amurense) to the Minnesota Noxious Weed List. Amur corktree is an introduced species that has been planted throughout the northeast and midwestern United States. It is tolerant of many urban conditions including drought and salt. Additionally, it grows quickly, has rot-resistant wood, and grows in many soil conditions. A single female tree can produce thousands of seeds, and the trees can outcompete native species and become invasive or weedy.

Amur corktree can resemble our native walnut trees. When you take a closer look, however, there are several key distinctions. On a mature Amur corktree, the outer bark is thick and spongy. If cut with a knife or pair of pruners, its inner bark will be bright yellow. It has upside-down horseshoe-shaped leaf scars (the mark left by a leaf after it falls off the twig) and compound leaves with long leaflets that smell like citrus or turpentine when crushed. Its branching structure is opposite.

In the fall, the leaves turn a brilliant yellow-bronze, and occasionally this occurs after native trees have dropped their leaves. Fall may be a great time to scout for Amur corktree in areas you suspect it could be invading. Its dark blackish-brown berries, which resemble grapes, persist into winter, if the birds don't feast on them before winter. Amur corktree grows well in forests that people



Amur corktrees have short trunks with sprawling, low branches. Photos submitted

have disturbed with tree removal, construction, or other activities. Although it prefers to grow in sun, it can grow well in full shade. The shelf-like branches can shade out any competing species like native slow-growing oaks or hickories.

Amur corktree is a Specially Regulated species on the Noxious Weed List. Sellers must affix a label at point of sale which reads "Only sales of named male cultivars are permitted. Sales of all other Amur corktree are prohibited. All existing planted and escaped fruit producing trees must be controlled by tree removal or other means so that no seed is disseminated."

Report Amur corktree in natural settings via EDD-MapS.

For further information, please see:

- MN DNR Amur corktree plants
- UMN Extension Amur corktree invasives



Horseshoe shaped leaf scars can distinguish Amur corktree from our native walnut species.

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**ASSUMED NAME:** Enhanced Pathways Research.

**PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS:** 23680 207th Ave Verndale MN 56481 USA

**NAMEHOLDER(S):** Cheri Ann Kangas, 23681 207th Ave Verndale MN 56481 USA

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**SIGNED BY:** Cheri A. Kangas

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**ASSUMED NAME:** Blue Horizon Cleaning Company.

**PRINCIPAL PLACE OF BUSINESS:** 35 HICKORY AVE NW MENAUGA MN 56464 USA

**NAMEHOLDER(S):** Anne P Beldo 35 HICKORY AVE NW MENAUGA MN 56464 USA

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**SIGNED BY:** Anne Beldo

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## Signal crayfish confirmed in MN



The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of signal crayfish, an invasive non-native species, in Lake Winona, adjacent to Alexandria in Douglas County. This is the first confirmation of signal crayfish in Minnesota waters.

A commercial harvester contacted the DNR after trapping two signal crayfish in Lake Winona. Since the first catch, the harvester has found eight additional signal crayfish in Lake Winona. The DNR followed up with trapping in Lake Winona and in two adjacent connected lakes but did not capture additional signal crayfish.

One female was among the 10 adult signal crayfish captured and removed from Lake Winona. At this time, there is no evidence of reproduction; no eggs or juveniles have been found.

Signal crayfish are larger and more aggressive than Minnesota crayfish and the invasive rusty crayfish. They eat aquatic plants, detritus, fish eggs, smaller crayfish species and other beneficial native invertebrates. Signal crayfish might outcompete native species for food and habitat. Signal crayfish can spread between connected waterways or be transported by people. They can also crawl over land at night and during wet weather.

"Importing live, non-native crayfish to Minnesota is illegal without a permit," DNR Aquatic Invertebrate Biologist Don Eaton said. "Regardless of species, it is illegal to release non-native

plants or animals into the environment. We deeply appreciate that people harvesting crayfish are keeping a close watch on their catch and that, in this case, the harvester quickly reported this unusual-looking crayfish to the DNR."

Signal crayfish are bluish-brown to reddish-brown in color, with large, smooth claws and a smooth carapace – the protective covering over their head and mid-section. They have a white or pale blue-green patch near their claw hinge, which looks like a signal flag.

People who think they might have observed signal crayfish or other invasive species should note the exact location, take photos, keep the specimen, and submit their observations to EDDMapS (eddmaps.org/project/midwest/tools/infestedwaters/?page=map) or their local invasive species specialist (mndnr.gov/invasives/ais/contacts.html). To help confirm sightings of signal crayfish, photos of the blue-green patches on claws, the bright red coloring on the underside of the claws and full-body views from above and below are ideal. Placing the crayfish next to a ruler or other size reference is also helpful.

The DNR website (mndnr.gov/invasives/trade-pathways.html) has information about signal crayfish (mndnr.gov/invasives/aquatic-animals/signal-crayfish.html) and about pathways by which non-native, prohibited and invasive species are typically introduced.

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