



# Horse Chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* L

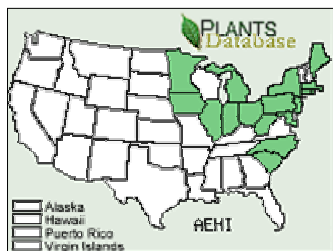
**Common Names:** Hippocastanum, horse chestnut, bongay, konker-tree

**Native Origin:** Europe

**Description:** Deciduous tree reaching 50 to 80 feet in height with a round or oblong crown. Large leaves are opposite, palmately divided with 5 leaflets. Large white flowers with yellow and red spots are produced in spring. Flowers are bisexual and have 5 white petals in large, terminal clusters. The fruit is a round, prickly, leathery capsule enclosing 1 to 3 smooth, chestnut brown seeds. Buds are large brown to nearly black and leaf-scars are large, shield-shaped or irregular.



**Habitat:** It prefers full sun and can grow in clay, loam, sand, acidic, alkaline, or well-drained soils.



**Distribution:** It is located from Maine in the Northeastern states to the Midwestern states and south to North and South Carolina. In addition, the National Park Service reports it invasive in GA, ME, OR, PA, and WI. It may be scattered in northern Kentucky.

**Ecological Impacts:** This species is on the Mid-Atlantic Exotic Pest Plant Council list. It has been planted as an ornamental for the attractive large white flowers and has escaped intended plantings. The weak-wooded branches break easily.

The large leaves, nuts and dropping twigs create litter. Once established, this species competes with native species for sunlight, moisture and nutrients.

**Toxicity:** Seeds and tea made from leaves and sprouts are highly toxic and can cause death.

**Control and Management:**

- **Manual-** Girdle remove bark and phloem layer from 10 cm band around trunk; Note: damaging the xylem layer could encourage suckering
- **Chemical-** Cut stems then apply herbicide; retreat suckers. Contact your state extension service. Follow label instructions and wear appropriate personal protective equipment.

**Natural Enemies:** White-marked tussock moth, Japanese beetle, leaf blotch disease, powdery mildew, anthracnose, and leaf scorch

**References:** [www.invasive.org](http://www.invasive.org), [www.plants.usda.gov](http://www.plants.usda.gov), [www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/aehi1.htm](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/map/aehi1.htm), [www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/poison/Aescuhi.htm](http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/poison/Aescuhi.htm), [www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/herbhunters/horsechestnut.html](http://www.hort.purdue.edu/newcrop/herbhunters/horsechestnut.html), [www.hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees/AESHIPA.pdf](http://www.hort.ifas.ufl.edu/trees/AESHIPA.pdf), [www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/ahippocastanum.htm](http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/ahippocastanum.htm), [www.rbg.ca/cbcn/en/projects/invasives/i\\_tree2.html#Horsechestnut](http://www.rbg.ca/cbcn/en/projects/invasives/i_tree2.html#Horsechestnut)