

Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants You May Find at Your Local Nursery

INVASIVE plant – Princess Tree



Princess or Empress Tree - *Paulownia tomentosa*

Native to eastern Asia - brought to the US sometime in the early 1800s as an ornamental plant, popular for extremely fast growth and showy lavender flowers. Considered one of the fastest growing trees in the world.

Capable of flowering within 10 years and can produce millions of winged seeds, easily distributed by the wind. Tree is weedy, messy, and has weak wood.

Aggressive growth in all types of disturbed areas.

Ecosystem detriment: competes with native species. Canopy produces dense shade making it difficult to grow plants underneath.

Native Alternative



Northern Catalpa - *Catalpa speciosa*

Large tall tree with upright shape

Height: 60+'

Width: 20' to 40'

Blooms: Large, showy trusses of tubular white flowers in late spring & early summer

Part shade – ridged twigs turn purple in the sun

Yellow foliage in fall

Native Alternative



Kentucky Coffee-tree - *Gymnocladus dioica*

Slow to moderate growing deciduous tree in the bean family

Height: 60-75'

Blooms: greenish white & showy – late spring & early summer

Full sun – tolerates wide range of soils

Yellow foliage in the fall

Choose male specimen to avoid seed pods

Photos borrowed from the North Carolina State University Extension Webpage - through the [CCPL](#)

Prepared by Goochland-Powhatan Master Gardeners Association

Other Suggested Alternatives:

Serviceberry - *Amelanchier canadensis* or *arbore*
Sweetbay Magnolia - *Magnolia virginiana*
Redbud - *Cercis canadensi*
Sourwood - *Oxydendrum arboreu*
Flowering Dogwood - *Cornus florida*

Photographs:

Princess or Empress Tree - *Paulownia tomentosa*: Jim Robinson – CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
Northern Catalpa - *Catalpa speciose*: Jim Lawrence – CC BY-NC-ND 4.0
Kentucky Coffee-tree - *Gymnocladus dioicus*: Jim Robbins – CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Sources for purchasing native plants:

Nurseries in Virginia

Hill House Farm and Nursery – Castleton, VA
Hummingbird Hill Native Plant Nursery, - Charlottesville, VA
Reedy Creek Environmental – Richmond, VA

Virginia Native Plant Society chapter plant sales - See VNPS Webpage for links to chapters

Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden - Spring and fall plant sales

Online Resources:

Prairie Moon Nursery
Gardens of the Blue ridge
Prairie Nursery
Direct Native Plants
Mid- Atlantic Natives

And, if your favorite nursery does not have a large selection of native plants, ask them to get more.



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Goochland-Powhatan
Master Gardener Association

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