

Austree

Austree is a hybrid willow. It is a cross between Hankow willow, *Salix matsudana* and white willow, *Salix alba*. This willow is a very fast growing tree. It can grow 10-15 ft in a single year eventually attaining a height of 50-70 ft. Austrees might be suitable for windbreaks and to stop soil erosion on slopes and in gullies. As with other willow species the roots can cause problems if the trees are near septic systems and drainage tiles. The Austree would not be a desirable shade tree because it has a habit of shedding numerous small branches during wind storms. The tree grows best in more alkaline soils so if the soil is above 6.5 pH then some acidifying fertilizer such as ammonium sulfate should be used.

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A row of Austrees
growing in central
Illinois.



A closer view of the trees showing their growth habits.

The tree nearest the road was damaged in an ice storm. Numerous sucker branches are now growing from the tree stumps.



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Branches at the base of the row of Austrees.



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Bittersweet Species

The American bittersweet, *Celastrus scanden* was once a common vine throughout the Midwest. The elimination of many fence rows and the harvesting of the vines for decorative purposes has reduced the American bittersweet. Now the exotic oriental bittersweet, *Celastrus orbiculatus* has become very invasive along roadsides and in forested areas. Unfortunately some nurseries are selling the oriental species thinking that it is the native species. The oriental bittersweet grows rapidly and covers adjacent vegetation. It often becomes so thick in tree tops that the trees break. The fruits of the oriental species tend to drop so they are not useful in making wreaths. It is important to know how to distinguish the two species. Ever effort should be made to eliminate the oriental species.

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Oriental bittersweet vine growing in a fence row in central Illinois.



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A closer view of the oriental bittersweet vine.



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The fruits of the oriental bittersweet are found along the vine branch.



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A closer view of the fruits of the oriental bittersweet along the vine branch.



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Fruits of the American bittersweet occur at the vine tips and appear to have a grape-like growth. The fruits are not as numerous as the oriental species and are a little larger in size.

