



# Rose of Sharon *Hibiscus syriacus* L.

**Common Names:** rose of Sharon, althea, althea rose, shrub althea, shrubby Althea, Syrian rose

**Native Origin:** eastern Asia- China to India; introduced as an ornamental and often used as hedging

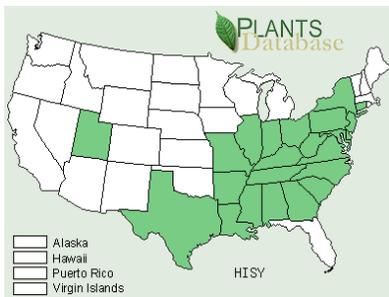
**Description:** A deciduous, multi-stemmed, erect-growing, densely branched shrub in the Mallow family (*Malvaceae*) reaching up to 10 feet in height with a pyramidal crown. Light gray-brown stems have raised leaf scars, hairy stipules and small buds. Ovate green leaves are 2 to 3 inches long, palmately veined from the base, alternate, simple, coarsely serrated and often three-lobed. Showy, 5-petaled flowers range from white to reddish-purple, 3 to 4 inches across, and bloom during the summer months. The flowers are perfect (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by insects and hummingbirds. Brown seeds develop in an ovate, pointed, dry capsule, 3/4 inch long and wide, ripening in late summer and fall. This prolific seeder has a deep taproot that is difficult to remove once the plant is 2-3 years old. It reproduces primarily by seed.



**Habitat:** It grows in full sun to light shade and invades waste areas, disturbed ground, forest, and forest edges. It prefers a well-drained humus rich fertile soil within USDA zones 5-10.

**Distribution:** This species is reported from states shaded on Plants Database map. It is reported invasive in KY, PA, TN, and VA.

**Ecological Impacts:** It has escaped intended plantings to invade, crowd out and displace more desirable native plants.



### Control and Management:



- **Manual-** Manage height and size by trimming or cutting; remove entire plants by digging up entire root system
- **Chemical-** It can be effectively controlled using any of several readily available general use herbicides such as glyphosate. Follow label and state requirements.

**NOTE:** Sterile cultivars for rose of Sharon: ‘Diana’ [Gold Medal Award], ‘Helene’, ‘Minerva’, are available at the U.S. National Arboretum, bred by Dr. Egolf.

### References:

<http://plants.usda.gov>, [www.nps.gov/plants/alien](http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien),  
[www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/hsyriacus.htm](http://www.cnr.vt.edu/dendro/dendrology/syllabus/hsyriacus.htm),  
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