**Phellodendron amurense ‘Macho’: ‘Macho’ Amur Corktree**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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### Introduction

Growing 30 to 40 feet tall with an equal spread, ‘macho’ amur corktree has a short, thick trunk and an open, rounded canopy which makes it ideal as a durable shade tree. It can be used as a street and parking lot planting because it is fruitless. The deciduous, dark green, pinnately compound leaflets change to bronze and yellow in the fall before dropping. The insignificant yellow/green flowers appear in late May to early June on 2- to 3.5-inch-long panicles. Fruits are not produced on this male selection of corktree. The species can naturalize as seeds readily germinate in the landscape, but this will not be a problem for this cultivar.

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### General Information

**Scientific name:** Phellodendron amurense  
**Pronunciation:** fell-oh-DEN-drawn am-moor-EN-see  
**Common name(s):** ‘Macho’ amur corktree, ‘macho’ Chinese corktree  
**Family:** Rutaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 3B through 7B (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** shade; specimen; street without sidewalk; deck or patio; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; urban tolerant; highway median  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

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**Description**
- **Height:** 30 to 40 feet
- **Spread:** 30 to 40 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical
- **Crown shape:** upright/erect, vase, oval
- **Crown density:** moderate
- **Growth rate:** moderate
- **Texture:** medium

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** odd-pinnately compound
- **Leaf margin:** entire, undulate
- **Leaf shape:** ovate, elliptic (oval)
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate, reticulate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** copper, yellow
- **Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** white/cream/gray, green
- **Flower characteristics:** not showy

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** no fruit
- **Fruit length:** no fruit
- **Fruit covering:** no fruit
- **Fruit color:** no fruit
- **Fruit characteristics:** no fruit

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure
- **Breakage:** resistant

**Current year twig color:** gray, brown
**Current year twig thickness:** thick
**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** sand; loam; clay; acidic; alkaline; well-drained; occasionally wet
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**
- **Roots:** can form large surface roots
- **Winter interest:** yes
- **Outstanding tree:** yes
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown
- **Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

**Use and Management**

The fruitless cultivar ‘Macho’ has thick, leathery leaves and a more pleasing, upright-spreading growth form. The attractive grey/brown bark is deeply ridged and furrowed, and on mature trees it takes on a corky texture. This cultivar should be planted instead of the species due to its less spreading and less drooping habit which is more suited for street tree planting. Pruning usually is not required once good branch structure is established early in the life of the tree. The shallow root system needs plenty of room to expand in order to establish the tree properly. Allow for adequate soil space for root development so they do not lift sidewalks and pavement. ‘Shademaster’ is also fruitless and available in the trade.

Amur corktree grows rapidly and prefers to be grown in full sun on deep, rich soil but will tolerate any soil, acid or alkaline. It tolerates wet soil and drought. Once highly recommended as a street and urban-tolerant tree, it does not appear to hold up to the rigors of city life under certain conditions, particularly restricted soil spaces (although the experts appear to disagree as to the tolerance of this tree to city life—the tree may be more sensitive to soil conditions than is commonly realized).

Propagation is by seed, which germinate readily.

**Pests and Diseases**
- This tree is virtually pest-free.