

Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

Common Name: Tuliptree (Yellow Poplar, Tulip-poplar, White-poplar, and Whitewood)

Botanical Name: *Liriodendron tulipifera*

Tree Type: Deciduous

Physical Description:

Growth Habit: The tuliptree is a long-lived, fast-growing species that is found on deep, rich, well-drained soils of forest coves and lower mountain slopes. The bark on young trees is smooth and ashy gray or brown in color, with white streaks. On older trunks, the bark is light gray to brown, thick, and distinctly and regularly furrowed and ridged. The twigs are smooth, shiny, stout, reddish brown in color, and have an aromatic odor and a very bitter taste. The terminal buds are smooth, flattened, approximately ¼ inch long, simple, blunt and covered by two reddish-brown scales, which give the appearance of a mitten. The winter buds are smooth with two duckbill-like scales. The leaves are alternate, simple and from 4 to 6 inches long. They are almost square in outline, and have 3-4 lobes with a truncate tip.

Height: The tuliptree usually reaches a height of 100 –150 feet and has a trunk diameter of 2 to 5 feet. This species is hardy to Zone 4.

Shape: Tuliptree is somewhat pyramidal in youth maturing to oval-rounded with several large sinuous (wavy) branches constituting the framework.

Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:

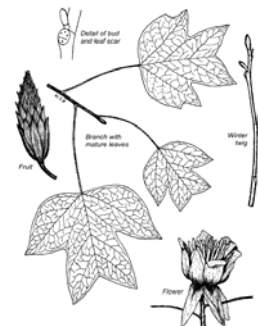
The perfect flowers of the tuliptree are tulip-like with 6 petals and yellow-green in color at the margin to a deep orange band at the center. The first flowers are usually produced when the tree is 15-20 years of age. Flowering occurs from May to early June. The fruit is contained in a cone-like structure about 3 inches long.

Range within Maine:

The tuliptree has been introduced statewide except in Washington, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset and Lincoln Counties.

Distinguishing Features:

The distinguishing features of the tuliptree include its unusual leaf with “cut-off” tip; the aromatic odor and bitter tasting twigs; the smooth winter buds with two duckbill-like scales and mitten-like terminal bud, and the tulip-like flowers.



Interesting Features:

Tuliptree is an extremely versatile wood with a multitude of uses. It is used for lumber, veneer, furniture, pulpwood, and carving.

The tuliptree is also valued for its honey.

Relationship to Wildlife:

Quails, purple finches, rabbits, gray squirrels and white-footed mice eat tuliptree seeds.

Landscape Use:

The tuliptree is not a tree for small residential property or streets. It should be restricted to large areas as it is a very large and magnificent tree when fully-grown and developed.

Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:

Tuliptree is susceptible to cankers, leaf spots, powdery mildew, root and stem rot, leaf yellowing, Verticillium wilt, aphids, scale, and tuliptree spot gall.

References:

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Manual of Woody Landscape Plants, 5th Edition. Dirr, Michael A. Publishing L.L.C. 1998.

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