

Liriodendron Tulipifera

Tulip Poplar

Family: Magnoliaceae

*"Stately tulip tree with yellow cup-shaped flowers, the Apollo of the woods,
Tall and graceful, yet robust and sinewy,
Inimitable in hang of foliage and throwing out of limb,
As if the beauteous, vital, leafy creature could walk, if it only would."*

– Trees, Walt Whitman

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Size: 80–120 ft.

Form: Most noticeable for its shiny green leaves that somewhat resemble a tulip

Fall Color: Yellow

Flowers: Showy flowers with yellow-green petals that grow high in the tree; appear late spring to early summer

Fruit: Oblong aggregate of samaras, the fruit is deciduous at maturity and matures in August–October

Bark: Light gray-green and smooth when young, then later flat-topped ridges and white colored furrows in diamond shaped patterns. In some kinds of poplar the bark will begin peeling as the tree matures.

Native: Yes

HABITAT

Found primarily in forests with well-drained soils and lower mountain slopes; mainly grows in the Eastern United States, southern New England, but is most abundant in the valley of the Ohio River and on the mountain slopes of North Carolina.

HISTORY & STORY

Historically the Cherokee tribe used parts of the tulip poplar tree as medicine to treat parasitic worms, diarrhea, coughs, rheumatism, gastrointestinal distress, fever, and snake



bites. Infusions made from bark were also used for poultices and used to treat fractured limbs, boils, and other dermatological problems(Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, Tulip Poplar).”

INTERESTING FACTS

The wood has a high commercial value due to its versatility and since it is a good substitute for the soft-woods that are in such high demand. It is also a highly important tree for the ecology because many of its seeds are eaten by wildlife such as quails, purple finches, rabbits, gray squirrels, and white-footed mice. The tree is also vital for hummingbirds who are attracted by the flowers and butterflies, specifically the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail who uses the tree as a habitat when in their larval state.