

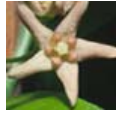


Invasive Plant Atlas of New England

Catalog of Species Search Results

Populus alba

(White poplar
Silver poplar)



[:: Catalog of Species Search](#)



[Common Name\(s\)](#) | [Full Scientific Name](#) | [Family Name Common](#) | [Family Scientific Name](#) | [Images](#) | [Synonyms](#) | [Description](#) | [Similar Species](#) | [Reproductive/Dispersal Mechanisms](#) | [Distribution](#) | [History of Introduction in New England](#) | [Habitats in New England](#) | [Threats](#) | [Early Warning Notes](#) | [Management Links](#) | [Documentation Needs](#) | [Additional Information](#) | [References](#) | [Data Retrieval](#) | [Maps of New England Plant Distribution](#)

COMMON NAME

White poplar
Silver poplar

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME

Populus alba L.

FAMILY NAME COMMON

Willow family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME

Salicaceae

IMAGES



Leaf aspects



Branch with
flowers



Close-up of
inflorescences



Habit



Lower leaf surface



Upper leaf surface



Habitat



Bark Texture



Clonal Runners

NOMENCLATURE/SYNONYMS

Synonyms: None

DESCRIPTION

Botanical Glossary

Populus alba is a deciduous tree that can grow up to 18-30 m (60-100 ft.) in height and 12-18 m (40-60 ft.) in spread. A very large tree could have a trunk diameter up to 1.8 m (6 ft.). The bark is very white and smooth when the tree is young. With age, the bark becomes darker and more furrowed. The terminal bud, young stems, and young leaves of the tree are densely tomentose, giving them a white appearance. As the leaves age they become dark green and glabrous above, while the lower leaf surfaces remain white and tomentose. The leaves are arranged alternately. Leaves on the longer shoots are palmately, 3-7 lobed. The shorter shoots have leaves that are ovate in shape with irregularly dentate margins. The apex of the leaf is acute, while the base is truncate or subcordate. The leaves measure 6-10 cm (2.5-4 in.) in length.

This species is dioecious, having separate male and female trees. The yellowish catkins containing the male or female flowers measure about 5 cm (2 in.) long, with the staminate catkins sometimes being longer. The catkins appear on the tree in early spring before the leaves have emerged, usually in late March or early April. The fruit are small, measuring 5-7.5 mm (0.2-0.3 in.). They are dark brown and dry. Attached to the seeds are white hairs that allow for transport by wind. The seeds are usually detached from the tree by late spring.

Page References Bailey 321, Fernald 522, Gleason & Cronquist 167, Holmgren 152, Magee & Ahles 395. See reference section below for full citations.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Populus grandidentata Michx. (bigtooth aspen)

Populus tremuloides Michx. quaking aspen)
Populus hybrids

Populus grandidentata and *P. tremuloides* both have flat petioles, while *Populus alba* has round petioles. While the twigs and terminal buds of *P. grandidentata* and *P. tremuloides* can be somewhat hairy, those of *P. alba* are tomentose.

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

Populus alba can move long distances by means of its wind-dispersed seeds. However, the seeds are not highly viable, and these plants spread vegetatively via suckers.

DISTRIBUTION

Populus alba is native to Europe. Its range extends from Spain in the west, to Italy in the south, Germany in the north and the European part of Russia in the east. It is present in all of the United States, with the exception of Arizona, Alaska and Hawaii. This species has been reported from all New England states.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Populus alba was introduced into the United States in 1784 from Europe, where it has long been cultivated as a landscape and street tree both in rural and urban areas. From these early introductions it has naturalized throughout the country.

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

Agricultural Field
Early Successional Forest
Edge
Floodplain Forest
Open Disturbed Area
Pasture
Roadside
Shrub Wetland
Vacant Lot
Wet Meadow
Yard or Garden

Populus alba prefers areas of disturbance where it can get ample sun. It can tolerate a variety of soils and different levels of pH, as well as a fair amount of salt.

THREATS

Populus alba can form large clonal communities that are capable of excluding native species from edge habitats. When attempts are

made to cut it back, it vigorously resprouts and spreads even more. Since it is competitive in early successional situations, it can interfere with succession in disturbed habitats. It is a very brittle tree that is easily broken and can cause damage to nearby structures or other trees.

MANAGEMENT LINKS

[Illinois Natural History Survey](#)

General description and management guidelines

[Plant Conservation Alliance](#)

Fact sheet including management information

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: A specific photograph or mounted snippet of the leaves showing the white lower surface.

Best time for documentation: Summer, fall.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Integrated Taxonomic Information System](#)

Taxonomic information

[The PLANTS database](#)

General information and map

[Plant Conservation Alliance](#)

Fact sheet including control information

[Illinois Nature Preserves Commission](#)

General information and control

[University of Connecticut Plants Database](#)

Descriptive information and photographs

[Virginia Tech Dendrology](#)

Description and photographs

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DATA RETRIEVAL

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MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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