

Populus balsamifera

Native to Maine

Poplar
Balsam Poplar

Upland
Wetlands, Water's Edge, Rivers

Leaves



Flickr.com user Matt Levin



Leaves are simple, alternate, ovate, and have finely toothed edges. They are 3-5 inches long. They are deep, shiny dark green on the surface, and light green with rusty blotches underneath.

LEAF ARRANGEMENT	LEAF TYPE	LEAF/LEAFLET SHAPE	LEAF/LEAFLET EDGE
 ALTERNATE	 SIMPLE	 PALMATE	 SMOOTH
 OPPOSITE	 COMPOUND-PALMATE	 OVAL	 TOOTHED
 WHORLED	 COMPOUND-PINNATE	 ROUND	 WAVY

Plant



Alan Hunt & Flickr.com user Matt Levin



Look for a deciduous tree that reaches heights of 9- 21 m and has a trunk that is 38-75 cm in diameter.

Stem



Flickr.com users wothrow and Matt Levin



On young poplars the bark is smooth and greenish to reddish-brown. On older trees it is gray in color and deeply grooved.

Seasonal Change



Flickr.com user dougwaylett



This tree flowers in early spring. Look for fluffy cotton & hanging strands of tiny flowers called "catkins" that are 10-15 cm long and bright or dull green.

Similar Species

The balsam poplar (*P. balsamifera*) can be distinguished from the similar trembling aspen (*P. tremuloides*), by the waxy whitish coating on the underside of balsamifera's leaves.

Did You Know?

This tree gets its name from the smell of their resinous sticky buds. In the spring you can definitely smell this tree! The large buds also have medicinal uses and can be boiled to make a salve for swelling or sore muscles.

Researched and created by Ruthie Hawley

Help us improve this species card! Contact us with your updates.