

Populus alba 'Pyramidalis' 'Pyramidalis' White Poplar¹

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INTRODUCTION

White Poplar is a fast-growing, deciduous tree which reaches 60 to 100 feet in height with a 40 to 50-foot-spread and makes a nice shade tree, although it is considered short-lived (Fig. 1). This cultivar maintains a more pyramidal or columnar form throughout its life. Some refer to this plant as Bolleana Poplar. It has the shape of a Lombardy Poplar but grows slightly wider. The dark green, lobed leaves have a fuzzy, white underside which gives the tree a sparkling effect when the breezes stir the leaves. These leaves are totally covered with this white fuzz when they are young and first open. The fall color is pale yellow. The flowers appear before the leaves in spring but are not showy and they are followed by tiny, fuzzy seedpods which contain numerous seeds. It is the white trunk and bark of White Poplar which is particularly striking, along with the beautiful two-toned leaves. The bark stays smooth and white until very old when it can become ridged and furrowed. The wood of White Poplar is fairly brittle and subject to breakage in storms and the soft bark is subject to injury from vandals. Leaves often drop from the tree beginning in summer and continue dropping through the fall.

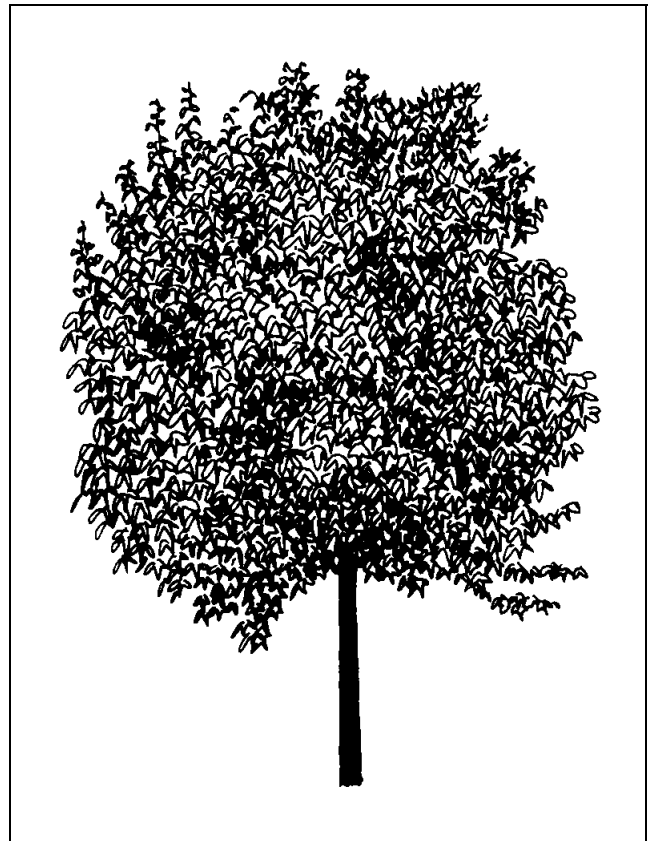


Figure 1. Young 'Pyramidalis' White Poplar.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Populus alba* 'Pyramidalis'
Pronunciation: POP-yoo-lus AL-buh
Common name(s): 'Pyramidalis' White Poplar
Family: *Salicaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 3 through 8 (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America

Uses: reclamation plant; screen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-500, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 60 to 100 feet

Spread: 40 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: columnar

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed; sinuate; undulate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: white

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: susceptible to breakage either at the crotch due to poor collar formation, or the wood itself is weak and tends to break

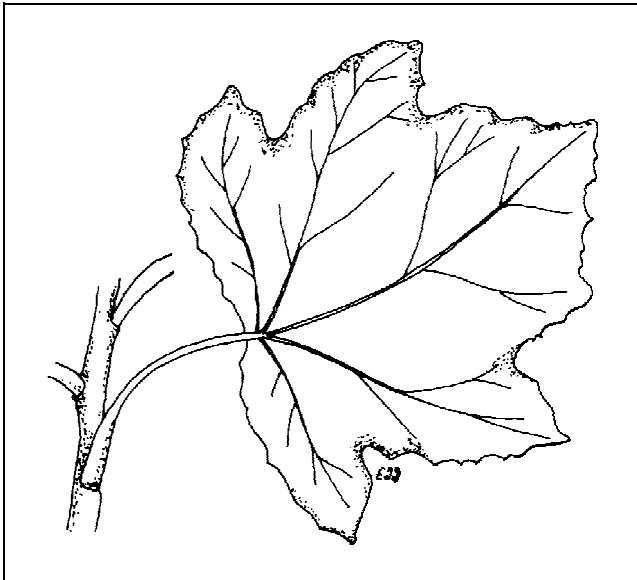


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Pyramidalis' White Poplar.

Current year twig color: gray

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: No entries found.

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

White Poplar should be grown in full sun and tolerates almost any soil, wet or dry. Suckering may be a problem on stressed trees but those growing vigorously are usually not bothered. In areas with much air pollution and soot, the fuzzy white undersides of the leaves may attract and hold dirt and dust making them unattractive.

This cultivar is also referred to as the 'Bolleana'.

Pests

No pests are of major concern, but occasionally leaf-hoppers bother it.

Diseases

Crown gall occasionally infects the tree.