



Tilia cordata 'Rancho' 'Rancho' Littleleaf Linden¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Littleleaf Linden grows about 50 feet tall and can spread 30 feet in most landscapes (Fig. 1). This tree has a slower growth rate and a narrower crown than other Lindens but has a dense upright oval shape which casts deep shade. Littleleaf Linden is a prolific bloomer, the small fragrant flowers appearing in late June and into July. Many bees are attracted to the flowers, and the dried flowers persist on the tree for some time. The foliage is unusually small and fine-textured, making for a beautiful tree. Japanese beetles often skeletonize Linden foliage, in certain areas in the northern part of its range. Defoliation can be nearly total and mature trees can be killed by severe infestations. Planting Linden in areas with severe infestations of this pest may not be wise. However, at least one reference reports that defoliation by Japanese beetles is common but control is seldom needed.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Tilia cordata* 'Rancho'

Pronunciation: TILL-ee-uh kor-DAY-tuh

Common name(s): 'Rancho' Littleleaf Linden

Family: *Tiliaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 7A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: container or above-ground planter; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; shade tree; specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been

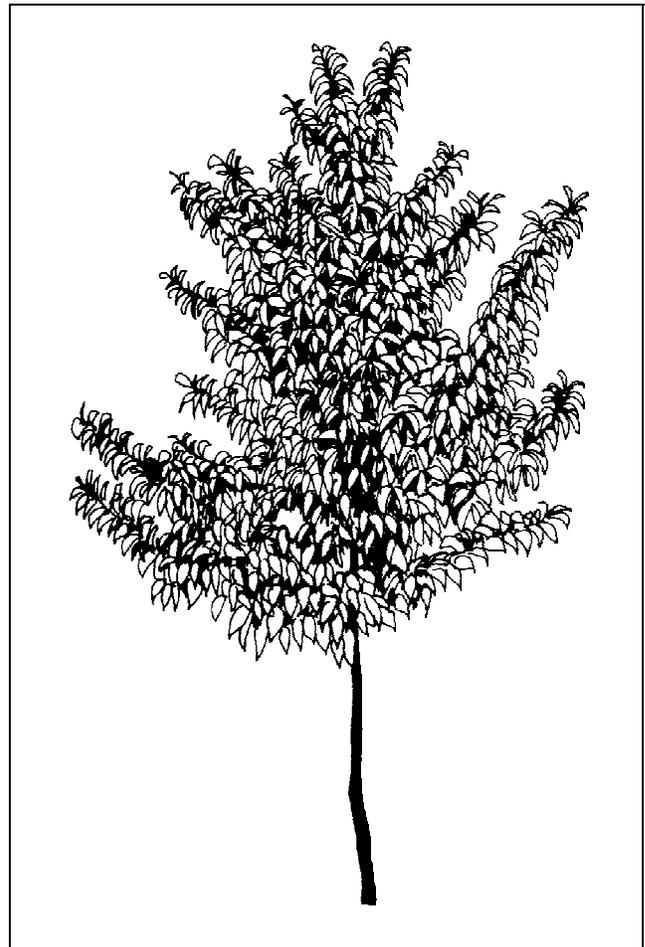


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Rancho' Littleleaf Linden.

successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-641, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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

DESCRIPTION

Height: 45 to 50 feet

Spread: 30 feet

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

Crown shape: oval; upright

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: cordate; orbiculate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: < .5 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown; tan

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

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

Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; green

Current year twig thickness: thin

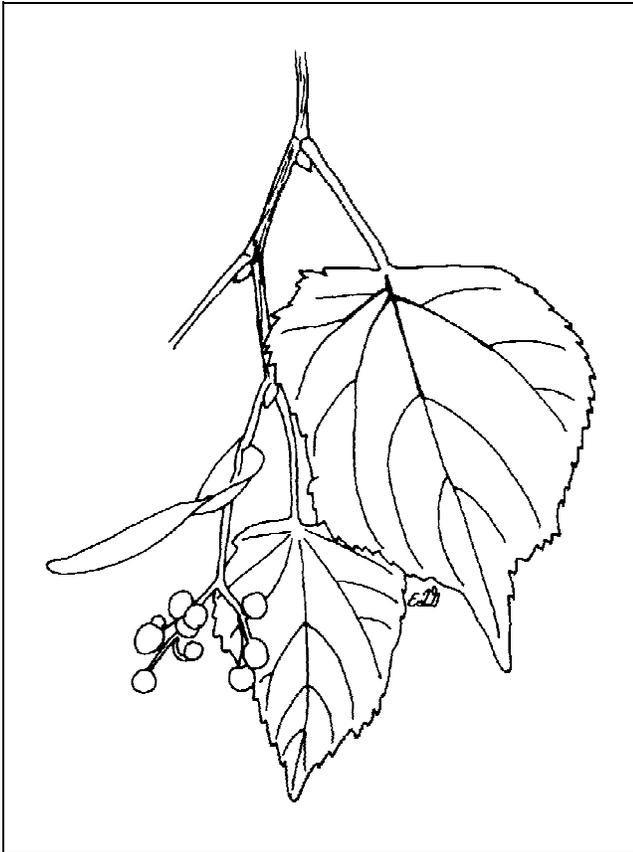


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Rancho' Littleleaf Linden.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun;
tree grows in full sun

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

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental
features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be
susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not
affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Small lateral branches arise from the trunk in an upswept curve but quickly bend gracefully toward the ground. Multiple trunks and upright, large-diameter

branches develop on the species and they may be poorly attached to the trunk, but this does not appear to be a problem on this cultivar. Be sure to purchase and train Linden to one central trunk with well-spaced, small-diameter lateral branches. The cultivars 'Greenspire', 'Glenleven' and 'June Bride' have also been developed for their very straight trunk. Linden may sprout from the base and these will have to be removed from time to time.

The tree grows in sun or partial shade, will tolerate alkaline soil if it is moist, and it transplants well. It is not particularly tolerant of drought, scorching at the leaf margins in summer drought. But this apparently does little long-term harm. It is more tolerant of heat and compact soil than American Basswood. Many communities plant Linden along the streets due to its rapid growth rate and dense, symmetrical crown but littleleaf Linden is sensitive to road salt. There are a number of cultivars with a variety of habits.

The wood of Linden is clear white, soft and often used for drawer sides in inexpensive furniture. Though not as soft as balsa wood, it sands poorly and is difficult to finish.

There are several other cultivars: 'Chancellor' - upright when young but becoming pyramidal, fast growth, with a straight, single trunk; 'Glenleven' - conical (pyramidal), fast growth, straight trunk, more open canopy than species; 'Greenspire' - straight trunk and radially produced branches-may be the least-maintenance cultivar; 'June Bride' - pyramidal, glossy leaves, profuse flowering; 'Pyramidalis' - widely pyramidal; 'Sterling' is supposed to resist Japanese beetles.

Pests

Despite susceptibility to various insects and diseases, control is usually not needed except for Japanese beetle.

Japanese beetles often skeletonize Linden foliage, in certain areas in the northern part of its range. Defoliation can be nearly total and mature trees can be killed by severe infestations. Planting Linden in areas with severe infestations of this pest is not recommended.

Aphids can be a problem on Linden causing the production of honeydew. This is more of a nuisance than a life threatening problem.

Several caterpillars feed on Linden. Have the insect identified then apply the appropriate control, if needed. *Bacillus thuringiensis* will not be effective against sawfly larvae. Fall webworm nests can be pruned out when still small.

Lace bugs cause discoloration of the leaves. The insects are found on the undersides of the leaves.

Spider mites cause leaves to become stippled and yellowed. The mites are usually not discovered until there is a significant infestation.

Diseases

No diseases are usually serious.

Anthraxnose causes elongated light brown areas next to the veins. The spots may be anywhere on the leaf but are most often near the tip. The spots are bordered by a distinct black band. Severe infections defoliate the tree. The disease does not require chemical controls every year but repeated severe infections may justify spraying.

Leaf blight causes leaves to brown and fall. The early symptoms are round, brown spots with dark borders. The spots become numerous leading to leaf browning and drop.

Several fungi cause cankers and dieback on branches and trunks. Remove infected branches as they occur and avoid wounding the tree. Fertilizing infected trees may help.

Powdery mildew forms a white coating on the leaves but is usually not serious and does not require treatment.

Verticillium wilt causes dieback and death of individual branches or the entire tree. Keep trees healthy with a regular fertilizer program to help prevent the disease.