

Liriodendron tulipifera

[Synonyms : *Liriodendron procera*, *Liriodendron truncatifolium*, *Tulipifera liriodendron*]

TULIP TREE is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern North America it has large tulip-shaped fragrant, lime-greenish-white flowers with prominent stamens and a broad orange band near the base, and leaves that turn golden in Autumn.

It is also known as American poplar, American whitewood, *Amerikanischer Tulpenbaum* (German), Basswood, Blue poplar, Canary poplar, Canary whitewood, Canarywood, Canoe wood, Cause wood, Cucumber tree, Hickory poplar, *Laliovník tulipánokvetý* (Slovak), *Liliovník tulipánokvětý* (Czech), Liriodendron, *Liriodendro Virginia* (Esperanto), Lyre tree, Old-wife's sheet, Old wives' shirt, Poplar, Popple, Saddle-leaf, Saddle tree, Sap poplar, Secoya, Soft yellow poplar, Southern yellow poplar, Tulip-bearing poplar, Tulipia, Tulip magnolia, Tulip poplar, Tulipwood, *Tulpanträd* (Swedish), *Tulpenbaum* (German), White poplar, White wood, Yellow poplar, and Yellow wood poplar; and in flower language it is said to be a symbol of rural happiness (blossom).

Inner bark (particularly from the root) yields Tulipferine. The wood is known commercially as 'yellow poplar' or 'whitewood'.

Tulipifera is made up of the genus name *Tulipa* and Latin *-fer* (bearing, carrying) components meaning 'tulip-bearing'.

The trees were familiar to North American Indian tribes, including the Cherokee tribe.

According to records its honey was eaten by them.

The soft and brittle, lightweight trunks were fashioned into dugout canoes by Cherokee Indians and these could be as much as 30-40 ft. long. They also used the wood to make babies' cradles.

Tulip tree was the source of medicine for several North American Indian tribes. Both the Rappahannock and the Cherokee used it as a stimulant. But while the Rappahannock applied leaf poultices for headaches, the Cherokee tribe used the bark as a sedative and for treating coughs, fever, rheumatism, worms and snake bites.

The light yellow to brown wood has been used in more recent times for making agricultural equipment, for boat building, and for shingling. It has also been used for manufacturing pulp and plywood, for veneering and interior finishing and for making musical instruments, sports equipment, toys, hatblocks, crates and barrels.

In the United States this tree became a state emblem for Indiana in 1931 and for Tennessee in 1947. In 1994 Kentucky also decided to adopt tulip tree (more familiar there probably as tulip poplar) supplanting its previous tree emblem the Kentucky coffee tree (*Gymnocladus dioica*).

Medicinally, the acrid-tasting inner bark has been used in folk medicine to treat heart problems, fevers, diarrhoea, indigestion, rheumatism and nervous disorders. It has also been used to expel worms and to treat children with cholera. Tulipferine is used by the pharmaceutical industry in drugs for treating heart attacks.