



Yellow Poplar

(*Liriodendron tulipifera L.*)

Also called “Tulip tree”

Location: The yellow poplar is found throughout the state but grows best in deep moist soils along streams and in lower mountain coves.

Shape: The crown has a compact, pyramidal shape, and often tapers sharply to the top.

Bark: The bark is light gray and becomes thick and deeply furrowed on older trees.

Leaves: The leaves are easily recognized because they are composed of four large lobes. They are about as broad as they are long, about 5 to 6 inches. The two outer lobes often flatten into a squarish end. In autumn, the leaves turn from green to bright yellow.

Flowers: The flowers are tulip-like and 1 1/2 to 2 inches across. The petals are yellowish-green and conspicuously marked with reddish-orange bands near the base.

Fruit: The fruit is a cone-like aggregate, 2 1/2 to 3 inches long, that breaks up as it matures in September and October.

Wood Type: Hardwood (but soft enough to work with easily). It is light yellow or brown, with wide cream-colored sapwood. The heartwood does not develop until the tree obtains considerable diameter, usually 2 feet or more. Loggers refer to a young yellow poplar as “white poplar” because the heartwood color has not yet formed.

Mature Height: 90 to 110 feet high (can reach 200 feet)

Mature Diameter: 2 to 5 feet (can reach 8 to 10 feet)

Uses: Cut into lumber for interior and exterior trim, veneers, flake and chip boards, turnery (turning on a lathe) and other high-grade uses.

Reference: Holmes, J. S., & Holmes, J. S. (2015). *Common forest trees of North Carolina: A pocket manual*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Forest Service.