



Information & photos courtesy of Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center <https://www.wildflower.org/>  
and The Missouri Botanical Garden <http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/>

## Liriodendron tulipifera

Tulip Tree, Tulip Poplar, Yellow Poplar  
**Magnoliaceae** (Magnolia Family)

*Liriodendron tulipifera*, commonly called tulip tree or yellow poplar, is a large, stately, deciduous tree of eastern North America that typically grows 60-90' (less frequently to 150') tall with a pyramidal to broad conical habit. Although widely planted throughout the state of Missouri, it is indigenous to rich woods in only a few counties in the far southeastern corner of the state. Trunks of mature trees may reach 4-6' in diameter, usually rising column-like with an absence of lower branching. It is named and noted for its cup-shaped, tulip-like flowers that bloom in spring. Flowers are yellow with an orange band at the base of each petal. Although the flowers are 2" in length, they can go unnoticed on large trees because the flowers appear after the leaves are fully developed. Sometimes the flowers are first noticed when the attractive petals begin to fall below the tree. Flowers are followed by dry, scaly, oblong, cone-shaped brown fruits, each bearing numerous winged seeds. Four-lobed bright green leaves (to 8" across) turn golden yellow in fall. Wood is used inter alia for furniture, plywood, boatbuilding, paper pulp and general lumber. Native Americans made dugout canoes from tuliptree trunks. This is the state tree of Kentucky, Tennessee and Indiana.

Genus name comes from the Greek words *leirion* meaning a lily and *dendron* meaning a tree for the flowers.

Specific epithet means tulip bearing for the form of the flowers. Plant Characteristics

**Duration:** Perennial

**Zone:** 4 to 9

**Height:** 60.00 to 90.00 feet

**Spread:** 30.00 to 50.00 feet

**Sun:** Full sun

**Water:** Medium

**Maintenance:** Low

**Suggested Use:** Shade Tree, Flowering Tree

**Tolerate:** Rabbit, Deer, Clay Soil, Wet Soil, Black Walnut

Bloom Information

**Bloom Color:** Yellow , Green , Brown

**Bloom Time:** Apr , May , Jun

Distribution

**USA:** AL , AR , CT , DC , DE , FL , GA , IA , IL , IN , KY , LA , MA , MD , MI , MO , MS , NC , NJ , NY , OH , PA , RI , SC , TN , TX , VA , VT , WV

**Canada:** ON

**Native Distribution:** W. VT to s. MI & s.e IL, s. to n. FL & LA

**Native Habitat:** Low, rich woods; stream banks

Growing Conditions

**Water Use:** Medium

**Light Requirement:** Sun , Part Shade , Shade

**Soil Moisture:** Moist

**Soil pH:** Acidic (pH<6.8)

**CaCO3 Tolerance:** Low

**Soil Description:** Rich, moist soils.

**Conditions Comments:** Tulip tree is insect and disease free. It is intolerant of compacted soil and should not be placed in confined beds or planters near pavement. It grows very rapidly in deep, rich well-drained soils with uniform rainfall. Dry summer weather causes physiological problems. Tulip tree drops its foliage in response to drought and is somewhat weak-wooded.

Benefit

**Use Wildlife:** This is a favorite nesting tree for birds and the flowers attract hummingbirds.

**Use Medicinal:** A pioneer species.

First Nations used the inner bark medicinally as worming medicine, antiarthritic, cough syrup and cholera remedy. (Athenic)

**Conspicuous Flowers:** yes

**Attracts:** Birds , Butterflies , Hummingbirds

**Larval Host:** Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*)

Value to Beneficial Insects

Special Value to Honey Bees. Lindtner scores Tulip Tree as 5 stars for Nectar collection and 4 stars for Polen collection (out of 5 stars). Pollen packets are creamy-white

This information was provided by the Pollinator Program at **The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation**.