

Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

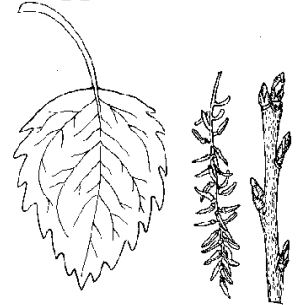
Common Name: Bigtooth Aspen (Largetooth Aspen, Poplar, or Popple)

Botanical Name:

Tree Type: Deciduous

Physical Description:

Growth Habit: Bigtooth aspen is a medium-sized, rapidly growing, and short-lived “weed” tree. It grows best on deep, moist soils, and may be found in river bottoms and near bodies of water. It can also be located in burned-over forests, abandoned fields and at the bottom of slopes. The bark is smooth, olive to gray-green in color. The base of old trees is dark and divided into broad, irregular, flat ridges. The twigs are stout, round, reddish or yellowish brown in color in early winter and are often pale and downy. The leaves are alternate, simple, from 3 to 6 inches long, roughly triangular with a square base, and coarsely and irregularly toothed margins. In the spring the leaves are a distinctive silvery green, eventually turning dark green on the upper surface.



Height: Bigtooth aspen reaches a height of 60 to 80 feet with a trunk diameter of 10 to 20 inches. This species is hardy to Zone 3.

Shape: The bigtooth aspen is often pyramidal in youth with a central leader, developing an oval, open, irregular crown at maturity.

Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:

Bigtooth aspen is dioecious and the flowers appear before the leaves. The male flowers occur as large pendulous catkins. The female flowers produce the cottony seeds that disperse in the wind. The fruit ripens at the end of May or in early June.

Range within Maine:

Bigtooth aspen occurs statewide and commonly grows with quaking aspen.

Distinguishing Features:

The base of the leaves is square and the edges are coarsely and irregularly toothed. When the leaves first emerge in the spring, they are a distinctive, silvery green color. The buds are dull gray, slightly hairy and not sticky.

Interesting Features:

The wood is soft and light-colored and is similar to that of the trembling aspen. It is used for pulp, woodenware, crates and boxes.

Relationship to Wildlife:

Beaver can kill large portions of stands both by flooding and by cutting trees. Deer and hare have also been known to heavily browse young stands. Other wildlife use the foliage, twigs and buds as food.

Landscape Use:

Bigtooth aspen has few ornamental aspects and generally does not make a good tree for the home landscape.

Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:

Bigtooth aspen may become subject to a number of agents that cause damage and mortality. Fire can easily kill these thin-barked trees; hailstorms may defoliate trees and severely scar stems. Cankers, heart rot, the forest tent caterpillar, poplar borer also affect this species.

References:

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