

Cladrastis kentukea

Yellowwood, Kentucky yellowwood, American yellowwood, Vigilia



Cladrastis kentukea (Yellowwood, synonym: *Cladrastis lutea*, synonym: *Cladrastis tinctoria*) grows in forests in the south-eastern United States, along with trees including *Aesculus flava*, *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Tilia americana*. The tree was discovered by the French botanist André Michaux in March 1796. The name *Cladrastis* comes from the two Greek words *klados* (branch) and *thraustos* (fragile), denoting the species' fragile branches. *Cladrastis kentukea* is a beautiful, medium-sized tree that can reach heights of up to 18 metres with a short trunk. In cultivation, its height is often limited to 12 metres. Yellowwood has a semi-open, round to wide flattened crown with low branches.

Cladrastis kentukea has compound, obovate leaves that bud light green and blooms beautiful fragrant, white legume racemes in June. Bees love it! Its golden yellow autumn colours and contrasting violet-grey bark are beautiful. The tree is called Yellowwood because of the characteristic yellow colour of its freshly broken or sawed branches. In autumn, *Cladrastis kentukea* bears striking, brown-green legumes.

Yellowwoods are perfect for use as an impressive statement in parks and large gardens. The species has a strong root system and few soil requirements. *Cladrastis kentukea* originated in valleys with hot micro-climates, where it grows in permeable, moist and often lime-rich soil. But it will also easily thrive in acidic soil. As a legume, the tree fixes nitrogen to the ground, fertilising the soil. Yellowwoods prefer an environment sheltered from wind with some shade to prevent sunburn. *Cladrastis kentukea* requires little maintenance. If you do wish to prune it, it is best to do so during the summer months. In winter, pruning will make the tree bleed.

SEASONAL COLOURS



TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: park, central reservation, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** Eco planting, Prairie planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: rounded, flattened spherical | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 9 - 12 m | **Width:** 9 - 12 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4A - 8B

ASPECTS

Wind: slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, nectar value 3, pollen value 0 | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: raceme, papilionaceous, striking, pendulous, scented | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** June - July | **Leaf colour:** bright green, buds pale green | **Leaves:** deciduous, obovate, composite, Nitrogen fixing | **Autumn colour:** golden yellow | **Fruits:** striking, pod | **Fruit colour:** brown-green | **Bark colour:** violet-grey | **Bark:** smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** grey-brown | **Twigs:** bare | **Root system:** deep, extensive, fleshy roots