

# *Populus balsamifera*

Balsam poplar, bam, bamtree, Eastern balsam-poplar, hackmatack, tacamahac poplar, tacamahaca



*Populus balsamifera* (Bam tree, balsam poplar) originates in the North-eastern United States, Canada and Alaska. It is the eastern counterpart to *Populus trichocarpa* and the species grows as a pioneer, from river banks to the mountains, along with *Acer rubrum*, *Alnus incana*, *Populus tremuloides*, *Picea glauca* and *Thuja canadensis*. The fast-growing balsam poplar can reach heights of up to 30 metres in its original habitat, but in cultivation, it often reaches heights of 18 metres, with an oval, semi-open crown that is about 10 metres wide.

The *Populus balsamifera*'s main charm is its large, ovoid leaves that bud olive and fill the air with the fragrance of balsam. The liquid it produces is used by bees to make propolis. The leaves bud very early on in the season, which sometimes results in frost damage, but the tree will fully recover from this. In the summer, the leaves are a glossy dark green with an olive-green underside. Its autumn colour is yellow. The balsam poplar blooms in March-April, with hanging catkins that produce capsules that release a lot of cotton-like seeds. Young trees always have smooth, grey-green bark, and older trees have furrowed, dark-grey bark.

*Populus balsamifera* prefers moist to wet soil and even tolerates temporary flooding in winter. The soil should preferably be nutrient-rich, and the environment sunny and sheltered from the wind. With its decorative large leaves and strong balsam aroma, the large tree is perfect for planting in parks and large gardens. Despite it being a pioneer species, there are balsam poplars known to be 200 years old.

## TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, woodland planting stock

## USE

**Location:** park, large garden, cemetery, countryside | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** Landscape planting

## CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** ovoid | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 18 - 20 m | **Width:** 8 - 10 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 3A - 7B

## ASPECTS

**Wind:** intolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist, wet, very wet | **Light requirements:** sun | **pH range:** acidic, neutral | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to short-term flooding

## PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** catkins, pendulous | **Flower colour:** green | **Flowering period:** March - April | **Leaf colour:** dark green, buds grey-green, underside grey-green | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovate, cordate, big, polished, scented, serrate | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** pappuses, capsules | **Fruit colour:** white | **Bark colour:** grey | **Bark:** furrowed | **Twig colour:** red-brown | **Twigs:** bare, with lenticels | **Root system:** deep, shallow, extensive, coarse roots,

