

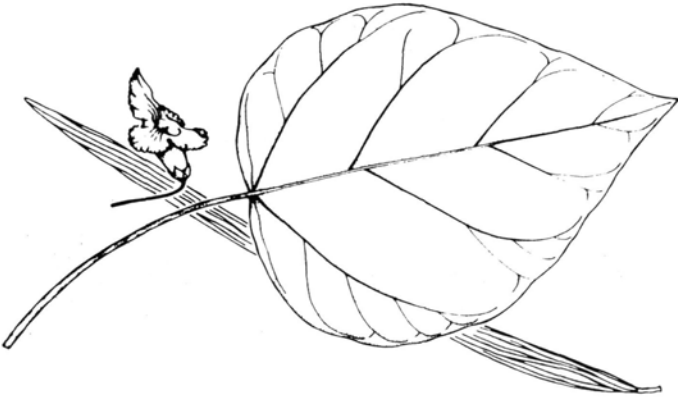
Leaves, Limbs, Needles and Boughs

by Fred D. Opperman

This month's selection of a tree is one jolt to plant near a green or tee. It has the largest leaf I believe, of any of the northern hardwoods.

Catalpa speciosa — Northern Catalpa, Lady Cigar Tree or Indian Bean Tree are all common names for this month's pick.

Leaves: The size of these leaves will easily cover a dozen golf balls — the reason not be planted near a green. Leaves, are whorled, simple, blades ovate, short-pointed at the tip, heart shaped at the base, up to 8 inches long and about as broad. Smooth along the edges, yellow-green and smooth on the upper surface, paler and finely hairy on the lower surface. Leaves when crushed give off a very unpleasant aroma.



Twigs: Stout, smooth or slightly hairy, orange-brown to grayish, with conspicuous lenticels; leaf scars in whorls of 3, round-elliptic, elevated, with 12 or more bundle traces.

Buds: Round, reddish-brown, slightly hairy, very small.



Fruit: This is where the tree gets some of its common names. These are elongated capsules up to 1½ feet long and ½ inch thick, at first green while hanging on the tree and then turning brown.

Flowers: Large, showy, several in a large cluster, appearing in May and June, the clusters usually more than 6 inches long, each flower up to 2 inches long, petals white and spotted with purple. Another reason not to plant near play for they are a bit messy when the flowers fall.

Wood: Light in weight, soft, coarse-grained, pale brown and brittle. The wood in contact with the ground is extremely resistant to rot, due to this it is used for railroad ties and fence posts.

This tree still has merit to be included in your tree inventory. But thought needs to be given on where to place it. It does seem to be tolerant to many conditions and soil types, thus a tree you can plant where others may not do as well.

Unfortunately it is a hard tree to find in the local nurseries.

Credit: **Manual of Woody Landscape Plants** by Michael A. Dirr and **Forest Trees of Illinois**.

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