

Eastern Cottonwood

Populus deltoides



State tree of KANSAS, NEBRASKA

One of the few trees to prosper on the Great Plains, the cottonwood was chosen as state tree for Kansas and Nebraska. Eastern cottonwood has a wide natural range covering all of the eastern United States, westward to the Rocky Mountain states. The tree is characteristic of low-lying areas, especially near rivers, streams, swamps, and bottomlands. Eastern cottonwood is a fast growing tree, as it can mature in 10 to 12 years. This tree is not ideal for most landscaping projects, as the wood is weak and the extensive root system may enter and clog water and sewer lines. The cottony seeds are produced in spring and will blow about in the wind. A large tree can deposit a snow-like drift of seed-cotton. Look for stout wide-branching tree; large wide simple leaves somewhat triangular in shape, often shiny, veins sometimes pale to bright red; flowers in cylindrical catkins; followed in spring by tiny seeds with tufts of cottony hairs.