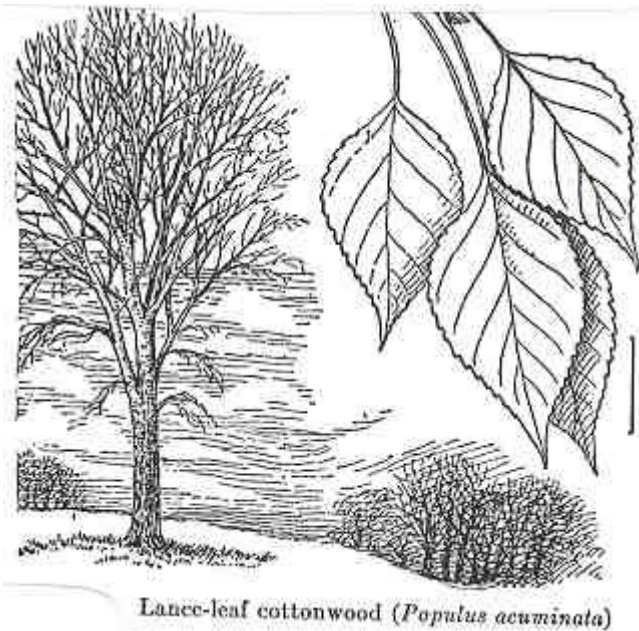


Lanceleaf Cottonwood



Our course lay along the bank of Ham's Fork, through a hilly and stony, but not a rocky country; the willow flourished on the margin of the stream, and occasionally the eye was relieved, on scanning the plain, by a pretty clump of cottonwood or poplar trees.

- John Kirk Townsend, Narrative of a Journey across the Rocky Mountains, 1834.

The Lanceleaf cottonwood is found along streams in and near the foothills, and is easily recognized by the long leaf stalk and the distinctive leaf shape, tapering to a point, with maximum width about mid-length not near the base of the leaf. It is found from 4500 to about 8500 feet (1200 to 2600 m) elevation. It grows to 60 feet (20 m) high. Limbs tend to be more slender and upright than on Plains cottonwood, but similar to the Narrowleaf cottonwood limbs. The current botanical name is *Populus acuminata* Rydberg, *acuminata* meaning tapering to a point, referring to the leaf shape.

Lanceleaf reproduces from root suckers, and by layering (rooting) of branches buried in wet soil, for example, following a flood. Whether it can reproduce by seed is not yet known to me.

This tree variety may be a hybrid of the Narrowleaf cottonwood and any of the varieties of *Populus deltoides*, such as the Plains and Rio Grande cottonwoods. All three of these cottonwoods, Plains, Narrowleaf, and Lanceleaf, are found together near the eastern foothills near elevation 5500 feet (1700 m); for example, in the Garden of the Gods near Colorado Springs.

Leaves: The leaf blade is 2 to 3.5 inches (2.5 to 9 cm) long; width is more than half the length, but not as wide as plains cottonwood leaves. Leaf shape is highly variable, even on one stem. *Leaf stalks are long* - at least 0.5 to 0.75 the length of the blade. Note that by contrast the Narrowleaf cottonwood and Balsam poplar have short leaf stalks. Leaf stalks are round and not flattened. Blades are thick, glossy, and leathery, like all cottonwood leaves.

Leaf shape is intermediate between Narrowleaf and Plains cottonwood leaf shape, and the leaf with its long stalk is the most distinctive characteristic of this tree. Lanceleaf cottonwood leaves have long round leaf stalks, and a variety of shapes, even on one stem. Buds are not aromatic and not sticky.

Bark: The bark is smoother and paler than the bark on limbs of the same size on the Plains cottonwood, often only slightly broken and pale yellowish or whitish green even on large trunks and limbs. The bark furrowing never achieves the deep, dark gray, furrows of Plains cottonwood bark.



Lanceleaf cottonwood



Lanceleaf cottonwood 60 feet (18 m) high.

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