

TREMBLING ASPEN



<p>A. Identification:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leaves--smooth, round to triangular shaped leaves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --dark green above, paler underneath -- turn golden yellow/red in the fall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flowers--born in male and female catkins on separate trees <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --seeds ripen in 4 to 6 weeks after flowering --good seed crops occur every 4 to 5 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fruit----tiny capsules covered with white cotton-like down
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bark----smooth and waxy appearance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -----pale green to an almost white when young and it becomes darker with long, flat-topped ridges when older -----sometimes have diamond shaped marks and white chalk-like blooms on the south side of the trunk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wood----is light, soft, and low in strength <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -----its color is from white to white gray
<p>B. Distribution / Location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most widely spread tree species in North America and grows from Alaska across Northwest Territories to Quebec and Newfoundland
<p>C. Habitat:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occurs in a variety of soils but prefers sheltered areas and often grows in pure stands especially as young trees • mixed with White and Black Spruce, Balsam Fir, White Birch, Balsam Poplar and Jack Pine • called a “nurse crop” because other trees enter a stand where the Trembling Aspen grows and eventually takes over
<p>D. Growing characteristics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium-sized trees are up to 25 m high and 40 cm in diameter and 80 years old • trunk is long, round, smooth • is branch free in the lower part • crown is short and rounded • the root system is shallow and very wide spreading

E. Reproduction:

- produces new trees when conditions are just right for seeds to sprout and survive
- seeds are in catkins and are pollinated by wind where the seeds are scattered by wind and scattered by water if in a lake or pond
- a single aspen can produce 1.6 million seeds each year
- seeds can only survive with the right temperatures, good rich soil, and plenty of water
- very large root system which sends up shoots /suckers where there is an area of sunlight
- are known to survive for hundreds or even thousands of years

F. Uses:

- **traditional**--aspen branches boiled in water make a cleanser for guns, traps and buckskin
--hunters also washed themselves in this solution to remove human odor
- **modern**---for decades was treated as a weed
--- the forest industry now knows how important it is especially for pulp
---also used to make plywood, particle board, pallets, crates, and matches

G. Fun Facts:

- is exported for use in the chopstick industry
- other names include “quaking aspen” or “quivering aspen”
- is the most widely distributed tree in North America
- in several native languages the name translates as “woman’s tongue” or “noisy leaf”
- if you roll the leaf stalk between your fingers to feel the flat stalk you will understand why it can tremble with the slightest breeze

Bibliography:

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