

## **BALSAM POPLAR**

*Populus balsamifera* L.

Balsam poplar inhabits the borders of swamps and the low bottom lands along rivers throughout the state except in York County. It gets its name from the fragrance of the resinous, sticky buds.

In habit, the tree is somewhat different from the two preceding poplars. The branches are stout, erect, more or less contorted at the ends, and form an open, rather narrow head. It reaches a height of 30 - 70 feet, and a diameter of 15 - 30 inches.

The **bark** on young trees is smooth, or sometimes roughened by dark outgrowths and is greenish to reddish-brown. On the trunk of old trees it is gray and separated into broad, rough ridges.

The **leaves** are alternate, ovate, 3 - 5 inches long, and 2 - 3 inches wide. They are deep dark green and shiny on the upper surface, light green and usually with rusty blotches on the under side. The edges are lined closely with small, rounded teeth. The petioles are round in cross section.



The **flowers** are in catkins which appear early in the spring just before the leaves.

The **fruit** ripens the last of May or early in June. Each seed is attached to a cottony mass so that it is often carried long distances by the wind.

The **wood** is somewhat like quaking and bigtooth, but it is not as strong. The wood is prone to decay while growing. The larger logs are sawed into landscaping ties.