

## Basswood - *Tilia americana*

### Habitat

- A majestic shade tree. Its scientific name, *Tilia americana*, the only native North American species of the *Tilia* genus. Basswood trees grow in most of the eastern United States, such as New England and New Jersey.

### Habitat and Form

- A large, fast-growing tree, 50 to 80 feet with a straight trunk 2 to 3 feet in diameter
- The crown of the tree is ovate – rounded, 30 to 60 feet wide
- Its dense foliage provides excellent shade, making it a popular choice for ornamental landscaping
- Prefers full sun to part shade

### Summer Foliage

- Large, dark green leaves on the upper surface, and matte gray on the undersides
- The leaves of the American basswood are distinctive and heart-shaped.
- They have serrated edges and a pointed tip.
- These asymmetrical leaves grow between 4 to 8 inches long and up to 6 inches wide.

### Autumn Foliage

- In fall, the leaves turn a lovely shade of pale yellow to yellowish-green

### Flowers

- Fragrant five-inch-long drooping clusters of yellow-white blooms from May to July
- These tiny, nectar-rich blossoms dangle in clusters from the tree.
- Each cluster contains 6 to 20 flowers, each measuring a little less than a half inch.
- Above the flower clusters are long, pale, green leaf-like bracts.
- The flowers bloom in early summer and may persist until fall.

### Fruit

- The fruit is a small, downy, hard, dry, creamy-green-colored nutlet that also grow in clusters

#### Bark

- Gray, furrowed bark

#### Culture

- Easy to transplant, is tolerant of clay soil, and adaptable to dry, rocky soils.
- It has some drought tolerance once established.
- This tree prefers fertile moist well-drained loams.
- Will not tolerate highly alkaline soils.

#### Ecosystem Services

- Fragrant blossoms attract honeybees
- Beekeepers appreciate the American basswood because of the excellent honey produced from its flowers' nectar.

#### Landscape Uses

- Excellent shade tree

#### Liabilities

- No serious insect or disease problems. Occasional linden aphids, borers, Japanese beetles, lace bugs, caterpillars, and scale.
- In hot, dry conditions spider mites may pose a significant problem. While infrequent, Verticillium wilt can be fatal.