

sycamore *Platanus occidentalis*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Hamamelidales

Family: Hamamelidaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The sycamore tree may reach more than 100 feet tall. Its bark is red-brown when young, breaking into scales when older. The older bark falls off in patches to reveal the white inner bark. The bright green leaves are simple in structure and divided into three or five shallow, sharp-pointed lobes. Leaves may grow to eight inches long and often are as wide or wider than they are long. Flowers are arranged in dense, round heads. Male and female flowers are separate but located on the same tree. Fruits are round, light brown heads up to one inch in diameter, each head containing many small seeds.

BEHAVIORS

The sycamore grows in bottomland woods, along streams and around lakes and ponds. This tree flowers from April through June. Its fruits are a good source of food for birds in winter.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests; lakes, ponds and reservoirs; rivers and streams

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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