



quaking aspen

Populus tremuloides

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The quaking aspen is a deciduous tree that may grow to a height of 50 feet and a trunk diameter of two feet. Its crown is rounded. The bark is yellow-green or white becoming gray and divided into ridges with age. The buds are lance-shaped, pointed and up to one-third inch long. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Each toothed leaf is rounded, about four inches long and nearly that wide. The leaf is green and shiny on the upper surface and silvery and dull on the lower surface. The leaf-stalk is about three inches long, smooth and flat. Male and female flowers are borne on separate trees. The staminate (male) flowers are in catkins up to four inches long. The pistillate (female) flowers are in catkins up to six inches long. The fruit are flask-shaped green capsules up to one-fourth inch long. Capsules are grouped in long clusters and contain seeds with cottony hairs.

BEHAVIORS

The quaking aspen may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It grows in the low ground of woods, marshes and bogs. Flowering occurs from April through May. The flat leafstalks allow the leaves to tremble in the slightest breeze, providing the common name for this species. The wood is used for pulpwood. Leaves turn a brilliant gold or yellow in the fall.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: northern 2/3

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.

Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.