



United States Department of Agriculture

Soil Conservation Service  
Program Aid Number 1278

# 'Imperial' Carolina poplar



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'Imperial' Carolina poplar (*Populus X canadensis* Moench) is a tall fast-growing tree shaped somewhat like a pyramid. It is especially suited for use in windbreaks around orchards because it is deciduous and does not interfere with air circulation in the spring. It can also be grown for pulpwood and timber.



Twenty-year-old specimen of 'Imperial' Carolina poplar

## Description

'Imperial' is a hybrid that reaches a height of 50 to 80 feet (15 to 25 m). Its yellow-gray bark becomes ridged toward the base of the tree. The twigs are somewhat angular and smooth and the buds are large and resinous. The tree's wide smooth leaves are rounded at the base. Its branches curve upward, and mature 'Imperial' poplars are narrow. Because 'Imperial' is a male hybrid, it does not produce the irritating cottony substance common to many poplar trees.

The Rose Lake Plant Materials Center developed 'Imperial' from cuttings taken from established plantings at the Elsberry Plant Materials Center in Missouri. The Soil Conservation Service (SCS) obtained the original rooted cuttings in 1955 from the Andrews Nursery in Faribault, Minnesota.

## Establishment

In the temperate zone, 'Imperial' should generally be planted in the spring as soon as frost is out of the ground. Planting should be completed by May 15 or June 1, depending on the location.

The maximum spacing between plantings should be 10 to 23 feet (3 to 7 m). One-year-old rooted stock is suitable for mechanical planting.



Imperial Carolina poplar can be used in windbreaks

To ensure establishment, cultivate the plantings to control weeds. You should also take care to prevent damage by rodents and other animals. Deer may be particularly troublesome because they use 'Imperial' for browse.

Roots from 'Imperial' can clog underground drains and sewer pipes. Therefore, do not plant the trees within 100 feet (30 m) of any drain or sewer pipe. SCS does not recommend planting 'Imperial' in urban locations. Laws may, in fact, prohibit its use in some areas.

## Availability

'Imperial' Carolina poplar is a clone-propagated cultivar. SCS maintains foundation stock at the Rose Lake Plant Materials Center in East Lansing, Michigan. 'Imperial' planting stock is now available from most commercial nurseries in the Midwest.

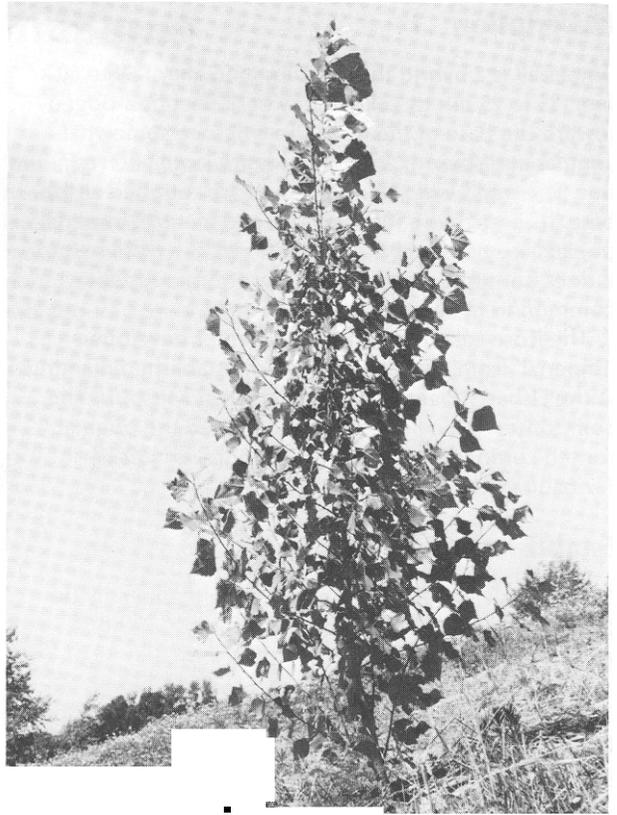
For more information on where you can buy 'Imperial' Carolina poplar and how to use and plant it, contact your local SCS office. It is listed in your telephone directory under U.S. Government, Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service. Assistance is available without regard to race, creed, color, sex, or national origin.



*Area of adaptation of 'Imperial' Carolina poplar.*

## Adaptation

'Imperial' grows very well in somewhat sandy soils with adequate moisture throughout the Great Lakes region. It does well wherever other poplar trees are common. (See the adaptation map.)



*Two-year-old specimen of 'Imperial' Carolina poplar*

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