



Ptelea trifoliata 'Aurea' 'Aurea' Common Hoptree¹

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INTRODUCTION

This cultivar of the deciduous North American native tree reaches 15 feet in height with a spread of 10 to 15 feet and forms a broad, rounded canopy over a slender, grey trunk (Fig. 1). The trifoliate, four to six-inch-long leaves emerge a bright yellow changing to light green in summer, turning yellow in fall before dropping. Inconspicuous greenish-white flowers appear in terminal clusters in June and July, their presence easily detected by the delicious orange blossom-like perfume. The blooms are followed by interesting, one-inch-diameter, flattened, tan "wafers" which will persist on the tree if not first consumed by wildlife. In the past, this bitter fruit was used as a substitute for hops in brewing beer.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Ptelea trifoliata* 'Aurea'
Pronunciation: TEE-lee-uh try-fole-ee-AY-tuh
Common name(s): 'Aurea' Common Hoptree, 'Aurea' Wafer-Ash
Family: *Rutaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 9A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: container or above-ground planter; near a deck or patio; specimen; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

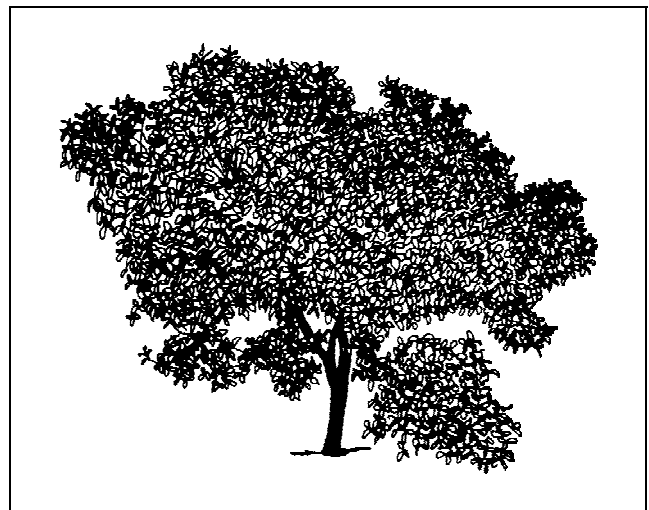


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Aurea' Common Hoptree.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 5 to 15 feet
Spread: 10 to 15 feet
Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette
Crown shape: round; vase shape
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound; trifoliate
Leaflet margin: entire; serrate
Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); oblong; ovate
Leaflet venation: banchidodrome; pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green; yellow

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: white

Flower characteristics: pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; summer flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; attracts squirrels and other mammals; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

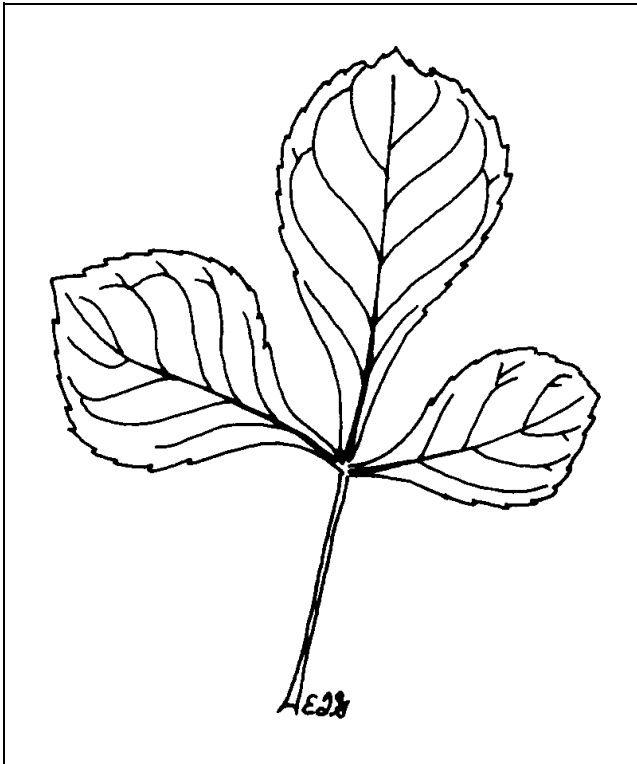


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Aurea' Common Hoptree.

Propagation is by seed, budding, layering, or grafting.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern although it is occasionally bothered by tree-hoppers, leaf spot, and rust.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

One of a few small trees which performs well in deep shade. Plant it close to the patio or deck, or locate it in a shrub border for fragrant flowers and yellow fall color display. Its native habitat is dry, rocky upland sites making it well-suited for non-irrigated landscapes.

Naturally found in the shade along the edges of woods, especially on rocky slopes in the Mississippi Valley, Wafer-Ash can be planted in full sun to deep shade and prefers well-drained, fertile, moist soil. While plants are better off if not exposed to extremes of wetness or dryness, Wafer-Ash is drought-tolerant once established. Transplants readily from the field.

Other cultivars include: 'Glauca' with blue/green foliage.