PLANT FACT SHEET

Populus alba L.

GENUS *Populus* **FAMILY** Salicaceae

COMMON NAMES Silver poplar

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Bark, Leaves

The leaves are boiled then eaten with oil and salt.
The inner bark is used as a substitute for flour in making bread.
The seed 'cotton' has been chewed.

DESCRIPTION

A broad spreading tree. It grows to 20-30 m high. The bark is dark grey-green and cracked. The branches are twisted. The young shoots are covered with thick white felt. The leaves are alternate. The leaves are dark green with a silvery and downy underside. They are 10 cm long by 7.5 cm wide. They can be maple like with 3-5 lobes and a wavy or slightly lobed edge. Leaves turn yellow in autumn, then fall. The leaf stalks are flattened and flexible. The flowers are separately male and female on separate trees. They are catkins. Male flowers are crimson and female flowers are green. The plant produces many suckers.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to N. Africa, C. and W. Asia and Europe. It grows well near the sea. It likes lime. It suits hardiness zones 3-10. Tasmania Herbarium. Arboretum Tasmania.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed. They can also be grown from root suckers and from cuttings.

NOTES

There are about 35 (100) Populus species. There are 4 in tropical America. Chemical composition: rich in Vitamin C. Contains populin and monobenzylsalicin. The inner bark of most poplar species can be eaten raw, or boiled.

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