**Populus alba ‘Pyramidalis’: ‘Pyramidalis’ White Poplar**

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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**Introduction**

White Poplar is a fast-growing, deciduous tree which reaches 60 to 100 feet in height with a 40 to 50-foot-spread and makes a nice shade tree, although it is considered short-lived. This cultivar maintains a more pyramidal or columnar form throughout its life. Some refer to this plant as Bolleana Poplar. It has the shape of a Lombardy Poplar but grows slightly wider. The dark green, lobed leaves have a fuzzy, white underside which gives the tree a sparkling effect when the breezes stir the leaves. These leaves are totally covered with this white fuzz when they are young and first open. The fall color is pale yellow. The flowers appear before the leaves in spring but are not showy and they are followed by tiny, fuzzy seedpods which contain numerous seeds. It is the white trunk and bark of White Poplar which is particularly striking, along with the beautiful two-toned leaves. The bark stays smooth and white until very old when it can become ridged and furrowed. The wood of White Poplar is fairly brittle and subject to breakage in storms and the soft bark is subject to injury from vandals. Leaves often drop from the tree beginning in summer and continue dropping through the fall.

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**General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Populus alba*

**Pronunciation:** POP-yoo-lus AL-buh

**Common name(s):** ‘Pyramidalis’ White Poplar

**Family:** Salicaceae

**USDA hardiness zones:** 3A through 8B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** invasive non-native

**Uses:** reclamation; screen

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

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**Description**
- **Height:** 60 to 100 feet
- **Spread:** 40 to 50 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical
- **Crown shape:** columnar
- **Crown density:** moderate
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**
- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** lobed, undulate, sinuate/undulate
- **Leaf shape:** star-shaped, elliptic (oval)
- **Leaf venation:** palmate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** yellow
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**
- **Flower color:** yellow
- **Flower characteristics:** not showy

**Fruit**
- **Fruit shape:** elongated
- **Fruit length:** less than .5 inch

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard
**Fruit color:** white/gray
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**
- **Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; showy; typically one trunk; thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure
- **Breakage:** susceptible to breakage
- **Current year twig color:** gray
- **Current year twig thickness:** medium
- **Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**
- **Light requirement:** full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** sand; loam; clay; acidic; alkaline; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** high
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

**Other**
- **Roots:** can form large surface roots
- **Winter interest:** no
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown
- **Pest resistance:** sensitive to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**
White Poplar should be grown in full sun and tolerates almost any soil, wet or dry. Suckering may be a problem on stressed trees but those growing vigorously are usually not bothered. In areas with much air pollution and soot, the fuzzy white undersides of the leaves may attract and hold dirt and dust making them unattractive.

This cultivar is also referred to as the 'Bolleana.'

**Pests**
No pests are of major concern, but occasionally leaf-hoppers bother it.

**Diseases**
Crown gall occasionally infects the tree.