



## *Tilia tomentosa* Silver Linden<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Rapidly growing 50 to 70 feet in height with a spread of 40 to 60 feet, Silver Linden could be quite popular for use as a shade, specimen, or street tree (Fig. 1). A deciduous tree, Silver Linden has a pyramidal form when young but develops into an upright silhouette with an oval canopy and often has multiple trunks. Casting dense shade below the tree, the four to five-inch-long dark green leaves are bright silver and fuzzy below, causing the trees to almost appear as if they are shimmering with each little breeze. The leaves turn yellow before dropping in autumn. In early summer, the trees are perfumed with extremely fragrant clusters of small, yellow/white blossoms but these are difficult to see due to the dense cover of the large leaves. The flowers attract large numbers of bees and a small, egg-shaped fruit follows the blooms.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Tilia tomentosa*

**Pronunciation:** TILL-ee-uh toe-men-TOE-suh

**Common name(s):** Silver Linden

**Family:** *Tiliaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 4B through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Uses:** hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air

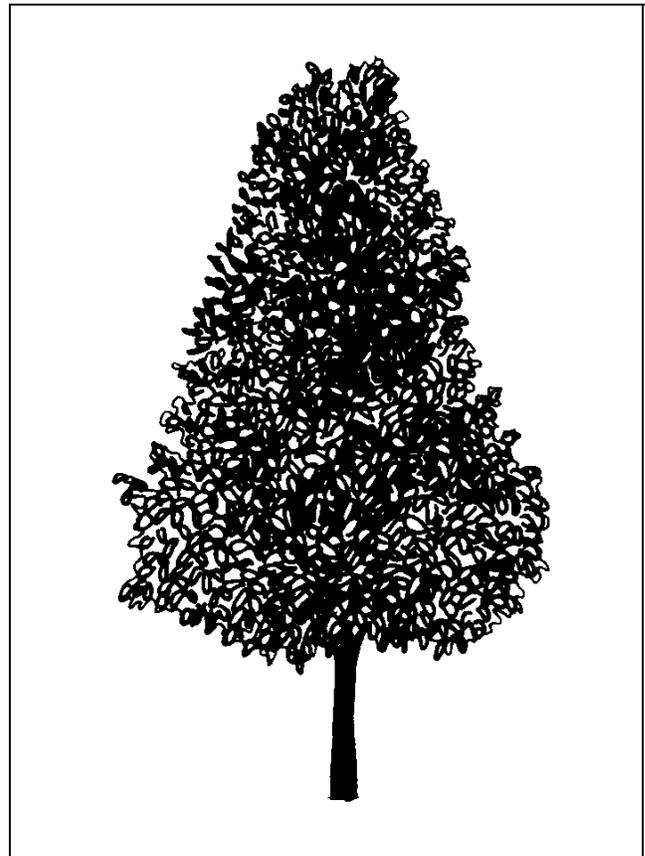


Figure 1. Young Silver Linden.

pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common

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

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-642, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 50 to 70 feet  
**Spread:** 40 to 60 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms  
**Crown shape:** oval; round; pyramidal  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** fast  
**Texture:** coarse

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** double serrate; serrate  
**Leaf shape:** cordate; orbiculate; ovate  
**Leaf venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** not showy

### Flower

**Flower color:** yellow  
**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; showy; summer flowering

### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval  
**Fruit length:** < .5 inch  
**Fruit covering:** dry or hard  
**Fruit color:** tan  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree

### Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** brown; green  
**Current year twig thickness:** medium

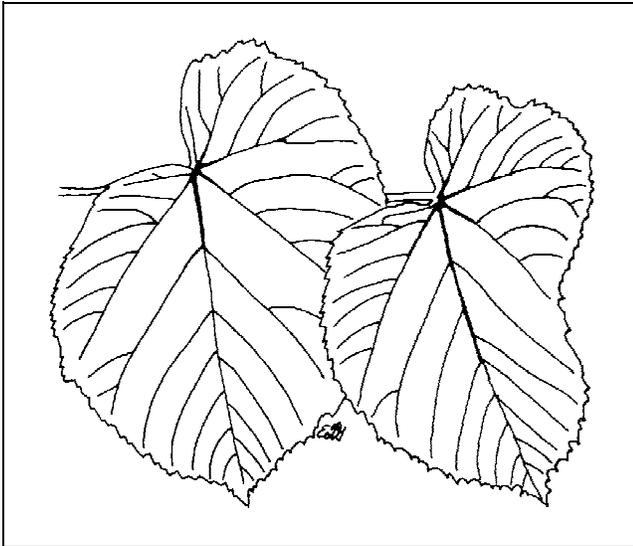


Figure 3. Foliage of Silver Linden.

## Culture

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

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

**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

## 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

**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

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

## USE AND MANAGEMENT

This tree is large and needs plenty of room to develop. Plant it as a specimen or shade tree on a commercial property where there is plenty of soil space available for root expansion. Well-suited for large tree lawns along streets and for large parking lot islands. Be prepared to remove sprouts periodically from the base of the trunk.

Silver Linden should be grown in full sun on moist, well-drained soil, acid or slightly alkaline. This tree is moderately tolerant of pollution, soil compaction, heat, and drought making it an ideal street

or shade tree. It appears to tolerate drought better than other Lindens. Some report that it is risky to transplant in the fall. Irrigate regularly following planting.

Available cultivars include: 'Green Mountain', a rapidly-growing form with a dense canopy and is reportedly resistant to Japanese beetle and gypsy moth; 'Princeton' reportedly compartmentalizes decay better than others; 'Sterling', reportedly resistant to gypsy moth and Japanese beetle; and 'Wandell', broadly pyramidal form, leaves reportedly resistant to Japanese beetle.

Propagation is most often done by cuttings, or by seed with difficulty (can take two years to germinate).

## Pests

Mainly aphids are problems although European Linden bark borer, Linden borer, walnut lace bug, caterpillars, Basswood leaf miner, elm sawfly, scales, and Linden mites can all be serious problems. The aphids will secrete a honeydew which will result in a dark soot over objects below the tree, such as parked cars or lawn furniture.

Reportedly less susceptible to Japanese beetles than other Lindens due to the pubescence on the under side of the leaves.

## Diseases

Anthracnose, leaf blight, canker, leaf spots, powdery mildew, and verticillium wilt can be occasional problems on Lindens.