



Cucumber Tree

Species at Risk

In Canada, the Cucumber Tree (*Magnolia acuminata*) occurs in Ontario and is the only species of magnolia that is native. This species is endangered and is at risk of extinction in Canada

The Cucumber tree is named for the resemblance which the immature fruit bears to a cucumber. Mature fruits are reddish in colour and are made up of many fleshy pods, each containing one or two scarlet seeds. Leaves are 10 to 24 cm in length, and about half that in width. The bark is brownish-gray with long scaly ridges. The large, solitary greenish-yellow flowers bloom in May and are mainly pollinated by beetles. Seed dispersal occurs mainly by birds. This tree can grow up to 30 m in height.

The Cucumber tree prefers moist forests or edges of upland areas with sandy soil, mainly in rich deciduous forests. It requires good light conditions to grow. This tree is often found with American Chestnut, Flowering Dogwood, Sassafras and other Carolinian species.

The major threat to the Cucumber Tree is loss of habitat. Recovery is slowed because some remaining trees are too widely separated for natural pollination to occur. In addition, the habitat requirements for this species are extremely specific, which prevents it from spreading to other areas.

It is illegal to search for, harass or capture a species at risk or destroy their habitat.

Pictures courtesy of Rob Tervo

References: COSEWIC assessment and status report on the Cucumber Tree *Magnolia acuminata* in Canada, 2010.

