10 Species of Linden Trees for Your Landscape

By VANESSA RICHINS MYERS | Updated on 05/16/26
Reviewed by ANDREW HUGHES

Credit: The Spruce / Leticia Almeida

Linden trees are deciduous and belong to the Tilia genus, which includes about 30 species native to regions like North America, Europe, and Asia. Often referred to as lindens or limes, these trees easily hybridize, sometimes making it hard to identify specific species.

Medium to large in size, they feature thick trunks and horizontal branches that create a dense canopy with dark green, heart-shaped leaves. Lindens are known for blooming from May to July, attracting bees with their flowers that provide essential pollen and nectar.[1]

Tip

With most genera of plants, species native to a region will be the easiest to grow there. However, with lindens, the native species can be sensitive to urban conditions, especially air pollution.[2] North American gardeners seeking a durable linden to plant in the city are best served by choosing one of the European species or hybrids.

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American Basswood

Credit: Jeremy Christensen / Getty Images

The most common North American linden, the American basswood (*Tilia americana*) makes a great yard tree for those looking to cultivate shade. This fast grower can sometimes grow as much as 24 inches a year and needs plenty of space to flourish. Known for its soft, lightweight wood, basswood was often used in Native American carvings. The bark was also collected and made into fiber for weaving ropes, baskets, and other objects. This is generally a low-maintenance tree, but, like other native species of linden, it doesn't have great tolerance for pollution and urban conditions.[2]

- **Name**: American basswood (*Tilia americana*)
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 2–8
- **Light**: Full, partial
- **Soil**: Sandy loams, loams, finer textured, well-draining.
- **Mature Size**: 50–80 feet tall
- **Deer Resistant**: No

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Carolina Basswood

Credit: Jean-Pol GRANDMOT/Wikimedia Commons/CC BY-SA 3.0

Another favorite of pollinators, the Carolina basswood (*Tilia caroliniana*), also known as the Florida basswood, grows in temperate climates and produces fragrant white flowers that hang in clusters. A gray-barked variety of this linden tree is native to Texas and has been grown and harvested for use in interior woodwork. The fruit is eaten by small mammals, and, as the wood decays, it produces cavities used by nesting birds like wood ducks and woodpeckers.

- **Name:** Carolina basswood *(Tilia caroliniana)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones:** 7-9
- **Light:** Full, partial
- **Soil:** Rich, well-drained
- **Mature Size:** 40-100 feet or more
- **Deer Resistant:** No

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European Linden

Credit: tanukiphoto / Getty Images

The European linden *(Tilia × europaea)*, sometimes called a common linden or a common lime, is a hybrid tree created by crossing the large-leaved linden (*Tilia platyphyllos*) and the little-leaf linden (*Tilia cordata*). It has a full, rounded growth habit that's less pyramidal than the American linden. This species is often used as a street-side shade tree. However, if it's not properly pruned, it can become an overgrown mass or clump of small trees, rather than an impressive singleton. The European linden has better tolerance for urban conditions than do native lindens.

- **Name:** European Linden *(Tilia × europaea)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones:** 3–7
- **Light:** Full, Partial
- **Soil:** Moist, fertile, well-drained loams, but adapts to a wide range of soil conditions
- **Mature Size:** 50–90 feet
- **Deer Resistant:** Yes

> ### Tip
>
> Basswood trees are poor at compartmentalizing, which is when a tree forms a wall around a wound to protect the rest of the tree. Because of this, pruning cuts should be smaller than 3 in. in diameter. The tree's crown should be pruned to reduce wind exposure since the wood is on the weaker side.

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Crimean Linden

Credit: Salvor / Wikimedia Commons / CC0 1.0

The Crimean linden *(Tilia* x *euchlora)* has sugary nectar in yellowish-white flowers that's popular with bees and butterflies and its foliage turns yellow in the fall. The Crimean linden (or Caucasian lime) has a short lifespan of about 20 years, however, it's less susceptible to problems caused by aphids.[3] Because of its short lifespan, this is a great linden tree for use in planter boxes or pots, where it makes an impressive statement. It has a rounded pyramidal shape, which often droops slightly with age.

While botanists are unsure of the parentage of this hybrid, most attribute Crimean linden (*Tilia* x *euchlora*) to a cross between the *Tilia cordata* and *Tilia dasystyla*.

- **Name**: Crimean linden *(Tilia* x *euchlora)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 3-8
- **Light**: Full, Partial
- **Soil:** Clay, loam (silt), sand, moist, well-drained
- **Mature Size**: 40–60 feet (much smaller as a container specimen)
- **Deer Resistant**: Unknown

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Henry's Lime

Tilia henryana (Henry's lime), berries and leaves on branch.
Credit: Brian North / Getty Images

Augustine Henry, a plantsman from Ireland, first discovered this species of linden tree and is the inspiration for its common name. Henry's lime *(Tilia henryana)* grows more slowly than other lindens, and it may take 10 years to reach 10 feet in height. This species bears large, sea-green leaves with serrated edges and silvery backsides, and its fragrant flowers form in clusters.

- **Name**: Henry's lime *(Tilia henryana)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 6-8
- **Light**: Full, Partial
- **Soil:** Moist, well-drained, prefers alkaline to neutral soil but tolerant of acid
- **Mature Size**: 20–30 feet (occasionally to 50 feet)
- **Deer Resistant**: Unknown

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Large-Leaved Lime

Credit: FLPA/Bob Gibbons / Getty Images

The leaves on large-leaved lime *(Tilia platyphyllos)* can grow up to 5 feet long, giving it its apt name. The tree itself is shaped like a dome, with a moderate growth rate. This species can be confused with the European linden tree grown in parks, however, the European species has a bumpy trunk, whereas the large-leaved linden's trunk is smooth.

- **Name**: Large-leaved lime *(Tilia platyphyllos)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 3-7
- **Light**: Full, Partial
- **Soil:** Alkaline, loamy, moist, fertile
- **Mature Size**: 60-80 feet
- **Deer Resistant**: Unknown

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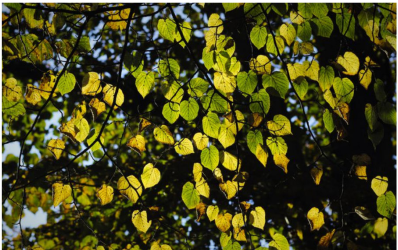
Little-Leaf Linden



Credit: Whiteway / Getty Images

The little-leaf linden's *(Tilia cordata)* common name directly correlates to its leaf size, which is much smaller than the leaves of other linden tree species. Its plethora of cultivars include 'Baileyi,' 'Bicentennial,' 'Burnt Orange,' and 'Greenspire,' all of which are used in backyard landscaping to create large garden hedges. The tree is also a great shade tree well into autumn as it remains green longer than other trees. This tree is quite tolerant of heavy pruning and also does well in urban conditions.

- **Name**: Little-leaf linden *(Tilia cordata)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 3-7
- **Light**: Full, partial
- **Soil**: Loamy, well-drained
- **Mature Size**: 50-70 feet
- **Deer Resistant**: Yes

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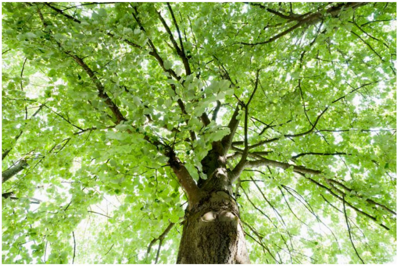
Silver Linden



Credit: Agenturfotograf / Getty Images

As the name suggests, the leaves on the silver linden tree *(Tilia tomentosa)* appear to shimmer due to the little white hairs on their backs that look silver and turn yellow in the fall. This species shines as a street-side city tree and has a sturdy constitution that can handle air pollution.[4] This broadly columnar tree has a rounded crown, making it an excellent shade tree for urban settings.

- **Name**: Silver linden tree *(Tilia tomentosa)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 4-7
- **Light**: Full, partial
- **Soil**: Moist, well-draining, tolerates alkaline
- **Mature Size**: 50-70 feet
- **Deer Resistant**: Yes

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White Basswood

Credit: James Steakley / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0

At one time, the white basswood (*Tilia americana* var. *heterophylla*) was categorized as its own species, *Tilia heterophylla*, but it has since been reclassified as a variation of the American basswood: *T. americana* var. *heterophylla*. It's very similar in appearance to the American basswood, except for the hairs on the bottom surfaces of the leaves, which give them a whitish appearance.

This linden tree is sometimes confused with silver basswood, but the leaf color is decidedly less silvery and more white. Creamy yellow flowers appear in late spring, hanging in clusters. Though this is a beautiful tree, like other American linden species, the white basswood can be intolerant of urban conditions. In suburban or rural landscapes, however, it can be an excellent choice.

- **Name**: White basswood *(Tilia americana* var. *heterophylla)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 3-7
- **Light**: Full, partial
- **Soil**: Loamy, moist, well-drained
- **Mature Size**: 50-80 feet tall
- **Deer Resistant**: No

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Weeping Silver Linden

Credit: Jean-Pol GRANDMONT / Wikimedia Commons / CC BY-SA 3.0

The weeping silver linden *(Tilia petiolaris)* also known as the pendant silver linden, has branches that droop toward the ground. It features whitish leaf undersides that give it a silvery look in the wind. This tree has a dense, low canopy, making it an excellent shade tree, with better tolerance for urban conditions than most native lindens. Some consider it a cultivar of *Tilia tomentosa*, assigning it the name *T. tomentosa 'Petriolaris.'*

- **Name**: Weeping silver linden *(Tilia petiolaris)*
- **USDA Hardiness Zones**: 5-9
- **Light**: Full, partial
- **Soil**: Moist, well-drained
- **Mature Size**: 50–70 feet
- **Deer Resistant**: Unknown

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