

POPLARS White & Lombardy

(*Populus alba* & *P. nigra* 'Italica')

Jackie Miles/ Max Campbell



Weed: white poplar

Note the juvenile plants on the right
The white underside of the leaves is clearly visible

Jackie Miles/Max Campbell



Weed: Lombardy poplar

Eurobadalla Shire Council



Weed: white poplar

Why are white & Lombardy poplars weeds?

- Both species reproduce vegetatively (branches touching the ground grow shoots) and through suckering, enabling the plant to invade surrounding areas, particularly along streamlines
- Dense thickets shade out native vegetation and prevent a healthy understorey, thereby decreasing habitat for reliant native animal species
- Although they have been used for bank stabilisation, they can result in erosion via the redirection of water to the opposite side of a stream
- Can trap sediment and block flow in rivers
- Strong root systems can disrupt water pipes and crack walls if planted too close to homes
- Can prevent access to rivers
- Fluffy seed spread on wind can cause hayfever in some people

Description

White poplar:

Plant: deciduous, to 22m tall, long-lived (80 years), smooth white or grey bark becoming rough at base of trunk, a rounder more spreading form than Lombardy poplar

Leaves: broad, glossy, green-dark green with a whitish, gently hairy underside and long stem, similar shape to maple leaf (but not always as defined), 3-5 lobes with wavy edges, turn yellow before dropping in winter

Seeds: fluffy white seed released from catkins. Seed is generally thought to be infertile

Flowers: catkins to 10cm long appearing before leaves in spring (see photos)

Lombardy poplar:

Plant: deciduous, to 30m, distinctive tall thin form

Leaves: generally triangular and broad in shape, hairless, turns yellow before dropping in winter and has a long stem

Seeds: fluffy white seed released from catkins. Seed is generally thought to be infertile

Flowers: catkins (see photo) to 7cm long in spring

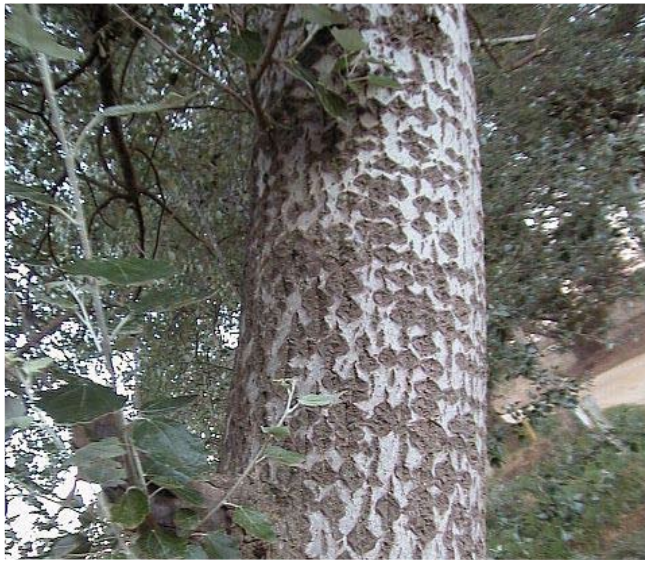
Dispersal via

- Primarily via branches dropping and taking root and via suckering
- It is believed that in some areas white poplar has reproduced via seed, having hybridised with other plants from the *Populus* species

Status

White and Lombardy poplars are not listed as noxious weeds in the NSW section of the Molonglo Catchment however they are important species for control due to their invasive nature. In the ACT, both white and Lombardy poplars are class 4 pest plants whose supply is prohibited. It is recommended that these plants are not purchased or grown anywhere in the Molonglo Catchment.

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Weed: the distinctive bark of the white poplar

Jackie Miles/ Max Campbell



Cottonwood flowers or 'catkins'

Both white and Lombardy poplars have similar flowers (or 'catkins') to those of *Populus deltoides*, commonly known as **cottonwood**.

Jackie Miles/ Max Campbell



Weed: lombardy poplar

Look-alikes

The species is not similar to any natives. Some birch species are similar to white poplar but do not have the weedy nature. Willows have similar catkins – see willow fact sheet for more information and photos.

Control methods

For advice on what time of year to implement the following management options, see the Molonglo Catchment Weed Control Calendar. Avoid planting these species. Ask your local nursery for native, non-weedy alternatives.

Cut and paint or spray small plants, alternatively drill and fill large plants. Any suckering as a result of controls will require follow up chemical applications. Control using chemicals should be undertaken when plant has its leaves and is actively growing (i.e. not in winter). Seek advice on chemical application from your Council Weeds Officer or local 'bush friendly' nursery. Always use chemicals as directed on the label.