



# Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

**Common Name:** American Linden  
**Scientific Name:** *Tilia americana*  
**Plant Family:** Tiliaceae  
**Alternate Names:** Basswood



Photograph by USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database / Herman, D.E., et al. 1996. North Dakota tree handbook. USDA NRCS ND State Soil Conservation Committee; NDSU Extension and Western Area Power Administration, Bismarck.



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### Phenological observation:

Budburst/First Leaf, Full Leaf, First Flower, Full Flower, End of Flower, Seed Dispersal

### Identifying Characteristics:

**Size:** Large deciduous tree.

**Leaves:** The leaves are alternate and are unevenly heart shaped. The base is often truncate (nearly straight across), with a stem (petiole). The blades are 5 to 12.5 cm (2 to 5 inches) wide, thick and soft, slightly leathery, with shallowly toothed margins. They are mostly smooth and green on both sides with some soft short hairs on the lower surface giving it a slight whitish appearance.

**Flowers:** The flowers are yellowish-white, 10 to 14 mm (approximately half an inch) broad, fragrant and nectar-bearing, in drooping 6 to 20 flowered clusters hanging on a stalk that diverges from near the center of an oblong, leaflike, and strongly veined bract 5 to 10 cm (2 to 4 inches) long. First flower is defined as when flowers are fully open and fragrant.

**Fruits:** Spherical, 8 – 10mm (0.3 to 0.4 inches) broad, hard and dry Seed dispersal is defined as when bracts and seeds turn brown.

**Bark:** The grey bark is thin, furrowed with flat ridges.

**Habitat:** The American Linden is found in moderately moist sites (coves, lower slopes, river bottoms) usually on deep well-drained soils. It rarely occurs in pure stands but it usually mixed with other forest species. It is also a popular ornamental tree across the country.

**Bloom time:** Flowering generally occurs from May to June and sometimes as late as July at northern locations or high elevations. Flowers appear usually 1 to 4 weeks after leaves appear.

Information sources:  
USDA ([plants.usda.gov/plantguide](http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide))



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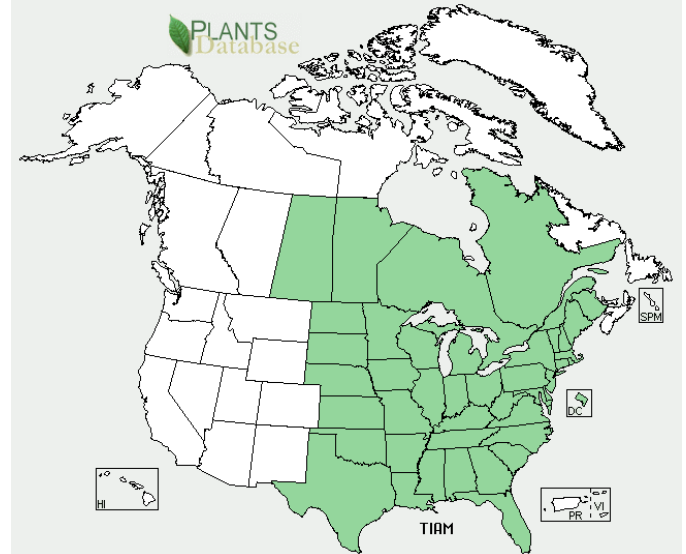
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**Did you know?** Native Americans and settlers used the fibrous inner bark (“bast”) as a source of fiber for rope, mats, fish nets, and baskets. Before the widespread availability of synthetics, American Linden was once the material choice for prosthetic limbs. It is still valued for its soft, light, easily worked wood especially for turned items and hand carving. It is highly prized as an ornamental because of its intense fragrance when flowering, fast growth, symmetrical shape to branches and the cool shade it provides in the summer.

## Distribution Area:



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database ([plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov))