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American Linden *(Tilia americana)*
Nebraska Forest Service

American linden *(Tilia americana)* is native along much of the Missouri River that borders Nebraska. It is a large tree with a rounded and very dense crown. American linden, also known as basswood, has been a favorite for planting in the city as well as around farm homes. Because of its size and shape it makes an excellent shade tree.

The Latin name for American linden, *Tilia americana,* means simply linden of America. The tree is pyramidal when it is young and as it matures the crown becomes more rounded. The leaves are somewhat heart shaped and it has a fragrant flower that is very attractive to honey bees. As a matter of fact, the wood from linden has been used for beehives since it is so light and yet still has the strength to hold honeycombs. Honey that is derived principally from the linden flower is generally considered the best in the world. The wood is also a favorite for wood carvers since it is so light and easy to work.

The seeds of American linden are rather unique. They are born on leafy bract and are about the size of peas. They are quite visible after the tree flowers in late spring.

Linden grows to be a large tree. The largest linden in the United States is in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania and is 292 inches in circumference and has a total height of 78 feet.

American linden is a moderate to fast growing tree. It enjoys full sun locations and will tolerate a wide range of soil conditions. It grows the best on well drained sites with deep topsoil. Linden is very sensitive to drought, soil compaction, and flooding so it is not often found on poorly drained bottomland or areas that are prone to flooding. It can also be sensitive to herbicide damage. Lindens can sometimes suffer leaf scorch during long, hot, dry spells in summer. It does not make a very good tree for planting in areas with lots of pavement. Some cultivars of linden are mistakenly used in parking lots.

American linden should be given lots of room to grow so don't plant it close to homes or other buildings. Since it is a large tree it should not be planted around utility lines.

There are several cultivars of American linden, the most popular of which is Redmond linden. Redmond linden will retain the pyramidal form that younger American lindens

have. It makes an excellent tree for borders and is quite lovely if left to grow branches all the way to the ground.