

## Aspen - Various (See Below)



A deciduous tree, two species which are important to home builders.

**Quaking Aspen** (*Populus tremuloides*) - Found in a broad belt across the northern United States, it is the tree most associated with the Rocky Mountain Region. Most aspen timber production is produced from this area. Its height averages 20 feet - 50 feet with a trunk

diameter of 1 to 3 feet. The biggest quaking aspen is found in Ontonagon, Colorado. It is 109 feet high and has a trunk circumference of 122 inches.

**Big Tooth Aspen** (*Populus grandidentata*) - Is restricted to the eastern part of the United States. It grows from Nova Scotia south to the Carolinas and west to Iowa, but lumber from this species is produced primarily in the Great Lake States and the Northeast. A small but increasingly important tree, this species stands 30 to 40 feet tall with a trunk diameter of 1 to 2 feet. The tallest big tooth aspen is found in Caroline County, Michigan. It is 66 feet high with a trunk circumference of 1 to 3 feet. Sometimes aspen is referred to as cottonwood, popple and poplar. The latter is not to be confused with yellow-poplar, one of the giants of the lumber world.

A graceful, slender tree, quaking aspen is famous for its flat, paper thin leaves that will flutter in the smallest breeze, making a distinctive audible rustling sound throughout the mountain ranges. Trembling and shimmering in the light, the yellow leaves next to the stark white bark of the trunks, is a sight not soon forgotten. The wood of both aspen species is pale grayish white to light grey brown. It is straight grained with a fine uniform texture - somewhat wooly or fuzzy to the touch. Although classified as a hardwood, aspen is lightweight, soft and easy to work. An unusual feature of aspen wood is that, once it is well-seasoned, it does not impart odor or flavor of any kind so it is very practical for use in the food industry.



Both quaking and big tooth aspen are readily available as lumber in the western U.S. Because of its somewhat non-descript grain and muddy color, it is used as a paint grade hardwood. Aspen lumber is relatively inexpensive. It is rare as a veneer. It is also used for corestock particle board, crating, pallets, boxes and miscellaneous turned articles. Because of its neutral odor and taste, it is used for food containers and other food industry needs. In recent years it has become increasingly important in the manufacture of engineered wood products. Wood fibers from small diameter rapidly growing aspen trees can now be turned

into large strong beams reducing our need to harvest larger trees. Quaking aspen has the most extensive growing range of any tree specie in North America. Although most prominent in the Rocky Mountain States, this tree covers the continent. It can be found as far north as Alaska, as far south as New Mexico, as far west as California and as far east as Virginia.