

WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

16564 Bradley Road, Bow WA 98232

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Black Cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*)

Distribution

Black Cottonwood occurs throughout Washington at elevations from sea level to 5,000 feet. It also has a much wider distribution through much of North America.

Growth Habit

It is a tall, fast growing, short lived, deciduous tree. A mature tree can grow over 100 feet tall. It can reach 50 feet tall in as little as 10 years.

Adaptability

Black Cottonwood is an important species in riparian zones throughout Washington. It roots aggressively and is a strong soil binder. Dense stands have proven more effective at preventing stream bank erosion during flooding than rock work in many cases. Its rapid growth provides shade to its surrounding environment. Grows best in wet to moist soils with partial shade. While it tolerates seasonal flooding, it will not grow in soils that are saturated for months at a time.

Comments

- Black Cottonwood is a commercially valuable tree. Its wood is used for lumber, veneer, and pulp.
- It is also an important wildlife species that provides food and shelter for many species of birds, mammals, and the occasional reptile. It is used for wind breaks as well.
- It is a worthy addition for restoration projects.
- Black Cottonwood was among the first species to begin colonizing the draw-down zone that was created by breaching the dams on the Elwah River.

