

WACD PLANT MATERIALS CENTER

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Quaking Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)

Distribution

Quaking Aspen is found throughout the Western United States. In the Pacific Northwest, it can be found throughout the East side of the Cascades where adequate moisture is present. It has also been found in west of the Cascades, near sea level, but much less frequently than east of the mountains.

Growth Habit

It can grow as tall as 80' where ample moisture and suitable exposure is available. In sites with only marginal moisture, the trees may only reach 20' to 30'. Aspen can reproduce by root suckers. Over time a single tree can spread into a large grove composed of genetically identical trees.

Adaptability

As noted above, Quaking Aspen prefers planting sites that are moist most of the year. Quaking Aspen will tolerate somewhat drier soils, but at the cost of reduced vigor and growth potential. Supplemental irrigation helps in marginally dry sites, but is no substitute for a good planting site.

Comments

- Its ornamental attributes are beautiful and change through the seasons. In spring, the leaves first appear striking chartreuse. As summer approaches, the mature leaves take on a bluish-green color and audibly tremble with the slightest breeze. The leaves then turn a bright yellowish-gold in the fall. After the leaves fall in winter, the trees show off their bright white bark.
- Aspen is also a very useful conservation species. Its branches provide nesting for many bird species, its tender foliage is used a browse for many mammals, its roots are a very effective soil stabilizer along streams and other bodies of water, and its dominate stature makes it ideally suited for providing shade to streams.
- Cloned Aspen groves are genetically identical and are considered a single organism. One such grove in the Fishlake National Forest is 80,000 years old and covers 106 acres. It is considered one of the oldest and largest living organisms.

