



## QUAKING ASPEN *Populus tremuloides* Michx.



*In the past, the quaking aspen was ground up and cooked for cattle feed.*

Quaking aspen, popple or trembling aspen is found statewide and is an abundant, rapid-growing tree occurring in either pure stands or in mixture with other species. It is found on many different kinds of soil, but makes the best growth on sandy, moist soils. Frequently it is the first species, with paper birch, to become established following heavy cuttings or burns. Intolerant of shade, it does not persist in dense woods. It is a graceful tree with slender branches that are far apart and often contorted. It has a round and narrow head. It grows to a height of 60–75 feet and a diameter of 10–16 inches.

The **bark** is smooth, often roughened by horizontal lines of wart-like outgrowths. It is a pale green with dark brown patches. The pale green areas feel waxy when rubbed. Bark on old trees is ash gray and dark at the base where it is divided into broad, flat ridges. It has a very bitter taste similar to quinine.





The **leaves** are alternate, rounded and short-pointed, with finely rounded teeth; dark green and shiny above and 1½–3 inches long. The flattened petiole causes the leaves to tremble in a breeze, resulting in a rustling sound.

The **flowers** are in catkins that appear before the leaves. The **fruit**, which ripens about June, is a capsule. The seeds are very small, light and cottony, and are carried long distances by the wind. The **buds** are dark brown, have a varnished appearance and may be slightly sticky. Flower buds are usually larger than the leaf buds.

The **wood** is close-grained, soft and rots very easily. It is used increasingly for trim, lumber, pallets, and for the manufacture of oriented strand board, landscape ties, plywood, core stock and expendable turnery items. It is used extensively for pulp. In the past, it was ground up and cooked for cattle feed. Sometimes referred to as “biscuit wood,” it was also used as firewood for cooking.



*Above left: young bark.  
Above right: old bark.  
Left: Quaking aspen buds are dark brown and very shiny.*

MAINE REGISTER OF  
BIG TREES 2008  
**Quaking Aspen**  
Circumference: 43"  
Height: 69'  
Crown Spread: 21'  
Location: Richmond



AREA OF OCCURRENCE

