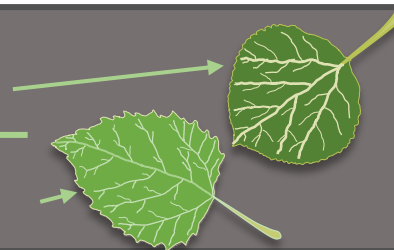


Quaking Aspen *Populus tremuloides*

Bigtooth Aspen *Populus grandidentata*



Quaking and Bigtooth aspen (often called popple) are the most commonly managed trees in Aitkin County. Aspen species reproduce through colonies; often, two aspen trees growing in close vicinity are simply different stems of a single aspen root system. Quaking aspens have 1” to 4” rounded, triangular leaves with finely toothed edges. Bigtooth aspen leaves are similar, with larger, jagged edges. Both trees produce catkins with fluffy, wind-blown seeds. Aspens are excellent wildlife trees and young shoots provide food for deer, grouse, and moose. Quaking aspen stands are important habitats for ruffled grouse. Mature aspen also hosts many songbirds, small mammals, and black bears. Both trees are used to produce pulpwood, firewood, and particleboard.

Height: *Quaking aspen:* 40’ to 80’; *Bigtooth aspen:* 50’ to 70’

Under favorable conditions, aspen species grow more than a foot per year when young. Yearling suckers grow much as 6 feet in a year. Growth slows as the tree nears maturity.

Planting environment:

Aspen trees are most commonly regenerated through cutting existing trees; this encourages new stems to grow from the existing root system. Aspen trees may also be planted from seed.

Soil composition: Sandy to gravelly, prefers loam

Soil moisture: Well-drained, moist

Sunlight: Very shade intolerant (full sun)

Maintenance:

Aspen requires very little continuous maintenance. Stems that sprout after a timber harvest will self-thin without intervention. Note that root suckers will spread up to 100 feet from an aspen tree and may be removed if undesirable. Aspen species have relatively short lifespans of 50-60 years and are often replaced by other tree species if the mature trees are not disturbed (such as through timber cutting or natural events like windthrow or wildfire). To maintain an aspen presence, consider a clear cut of mature trees. This will encourage new root suckers to sprout from the aspen’s root system.

Top diseases/pests:

1. Cankers
2. Forest tent caterpillars

