



Shade Tree (over 40')  
Deciduous

Native  
Map #45

*Kentucky Coffeetree*  
(*Gymnocladus dioica*)  
Family: *Fabaceae*

**Leaves:** bipinnately compound, up to 3 feet long and 2 feet wide, leaflets 2-3 inches long, margins smooth, base of petiole swollen; fall - yellow, usually not good.

**Buds:** alternate, sometimes one bud directly above another at the node, brown, slightly hairy, sunken and scarcely projecting beyond the twig, surrounded by downy golden rim of bark, terminal bud is absent.

**Stems:** stout, very coarse, smooth and shiny or downy, pith large in diameter and salmon pink colored.

**Bark:** recurved (curved backward), spoon-like depressions, gray brown .

**Flowers:** usually male plants and female plants, greenish white, borne in 8-12" panicles (female), male panicle about 1/3 the length of the female, female flowers fragrant.

**Fruits:** on female plants only, reddish brown, leathery pod, 5-10 inches long, containing a few, large blackish brown seeds imbedded in a sticky pulp, persistent through winter into early spring.

**Habit:** narrow oval but much variation.

**Culture:** Although it prefers moist, well-drained, high pH soils in full sun, the coffeetree is adaptable to urban conditions, tolerating drought and pollution.

There are no serious insect or disease problems on this species. Because of its cultural adaptability and trouble-free character, coffeetrees make ideal specimens for streets or parks. Because of their tendency to litter, this species is probably best sited in areas where a manicured impression is not important. Male selections are now available to avoid fruit production.

**Cultivars:** '*Prairie Titan*' - no information available



Mature bark



Fall color

**Credits: Photos from:** [www.midwestlandscapeplants.org](http://www.midwestlandscapeplants.org) and various other .edu websites unless noted. **Text from:** "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants" by Michael Dirr; "Tree Identification Characteristics (abridged)" from the University of Illinois Extension; [www.midwestlandscapeplants.org](http://www.midwestlandscapeplants.org); and misc. other sources. This publication may not be sold except to cover the cost of reproduction when used as part of an educational program of the University of Wisconsin-Extension.