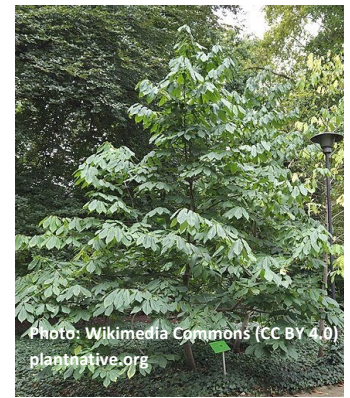


PAWPAW

A NATIVE, NON-INVASIVE UNDERSTORY TREE THAT PRODUCES NORTH AMERICA'S LARGEST EDIBLE FRUIT



KEY IDENTIFICATION FEATURES

- **Growth habit:** Small to medium deciduous tree, often pyramidal when young and more rounded with age.
- **Leaves:** Very large, simple, alternate leaves, 6–12 inches long, with a tropical look and yellow fall color.
- **Flowers:** Unusual maroon to purplish-brown flowers bloom in spring before or as leaves emerge.
- **Fruit:** Green to yellow-green fruits ripen in late summer to early fall; flesh is soft and custard-like with a flavor often compared to banana, mango, and vanilla.
- **Colonies:** Can spread by root suckers, forming small groves or patches over time.

Scientific Name	<i>Asimina triloba</i>
Plant Type	Deciduous native understory tree
Size	Typically, 15–30 feet tall and 15–20 feet wide
Light	Part shade to full sun
Moisture	Moist, well-drained soils
Best Uses	Edible landscapes, woodland gardens, restoration projects, naturalized areas
Other Names	Kentucky Banana, Prairie Banana, Hoosier Banana

HABITAT & GROWING CONDITIONS

- Native to Kentucky and much of the eastern United States, in rich forests, stream valleys, moist ravines.
- Prefers fertile soil with consistent moisture and good organic matter.
- Young trees benefit from shade protection, especially during establishment.
- Established trees tolerate part shade, but fruit production is usually better with more sunlight.

WHY IT MATTERS

- **Wildlife value:** Only host plant for the zebra swallowtail butterfly, whose caterpillars feed on leaves.
- **Pollinator support:** Spring flowers attract flies and beetles.
- **Food source:** Fruits are eaten by wildlife such as raccoons, opossums, foxes, squirrels, and birds.
- **Human use:** Produces edible fruit with a creamy texture and tropical flavor; fruit is highly perishable and best enjoyed fresh.
- **Native heritage:** Pawpaw is North America's largest native edible fruit and has a long history of use by Indigenous peoples and early settlers.



PLANTING TIPS

- Plant at least two genetically different pawpaw trees for reliable cross-pollination and fruit production.
- Paw Paws develop a sensitive taproot and do not transplant well once established.
- Protect young trees from intense afternoon sun during their first few years.
- Allow room for root suckers if a natural grove is desired or remove suckers to maintain a single-trunk tree.