FREMONT COTTONWOOD

Populus fremontii

FAMILY: Salicaceae

GENUS: Populus

SPECIES: fremontii

COMMON NAMES: Fremont Cottonwood
Common Cottonwood
California Cottonwood

POLLEN GRAINS: Spheroidal or somewhat deformed, 27 to 34 inches in diameter. Grains are without germinal furrows or pores. Exine thin and fragmentary appearing as a granular network thinly covering intine.

POLLINATING PERIOD: February to March

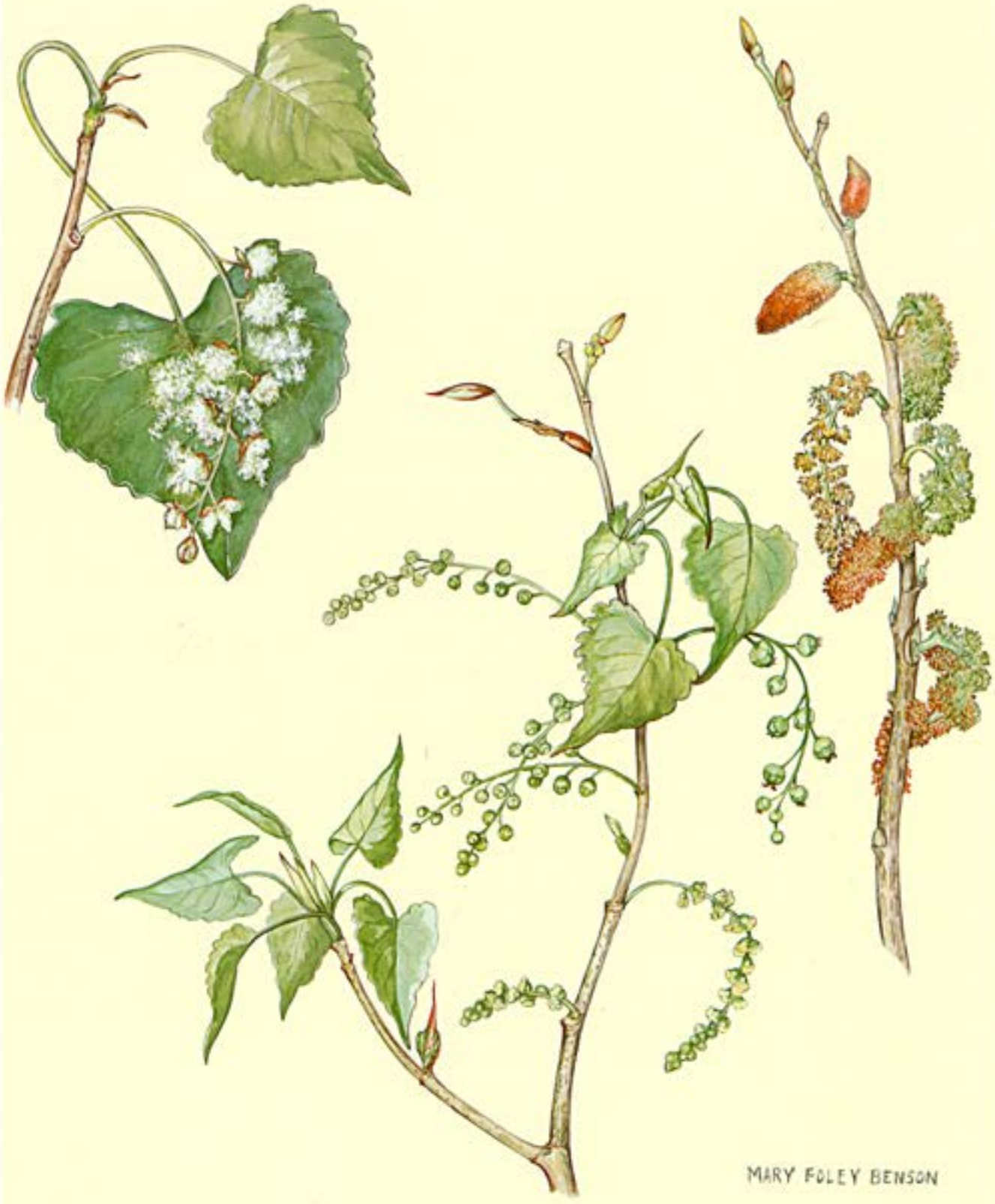
DISTRIBUTION: Below 6000 feet from Sacramento Valley in California southward into Lower California. Arizona cottonwood (P. McDougallii), a species so similar it is sometimes considered a variety of P. fremontii, is found in desert regions of California, Arizona and Nevada.

ALLERGIC IMPORTANCE: **Important in regions of abundance.**

Fremont cottonwood is a large tree to 100 feet with trunk diameters up to 5 and 6 feet. Bark is white, rough furrowed and cracked. Twigs are stoutish. Bright green leaves are irregularly and coarsely toothed with a sharp-pointed apex. The petioles are flattened.

Fremont cottonwood was selected to illustrate the characteristics of its genus, the commonly termed, poplars, cottonwoods and aspens. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The inflorescence is a catkin. The staminate catkin is pendulous consisting of many stamens which are frequently rather colorful in shades of red and yellow. Pollination occurs just before the opening of the leaf buds. The pistillate catkins are greenish comprised of a loose series of pistils which develop into a capsul fruit, each capsul subtended by a cup shaped disk. At maturity the capsuls split open to release the cotton in which the small seeds are imbedded.

There are 15 species of Populus native to North America. Several introduced species are widely used ornamentally. To these add a few hybrids and numerous horticultural varieties and the result is some confusion in the nomenclature of the group.



Top Left Illustration
Seed dispersal phase

Populus Fremontii
(Fremont Cottonwood)
Center Illustration *Female Catkins*

Top Right Illustration
Male Catkins