Golden Catalpa

Catalpa bignonioides 'Aurea'



Golden Catalpa foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 5

Other Names: Southern Catalpa

Description:

A most interesting medium sized shade tree featuring enormous golden leaves all season long, very showy white and purple flowers in early summer, and long narrow pods in fall, extremely adaptable; very coarse texture, use where this is required

Ornamental Features

Golden Catalpa features showy panicles of fragrant white orchid-like flowers with yellow throats and purple spots rising above the foliage in mid summer. It has attractive yellow foliage with hints of chartreuse which emerges brick red in spring. The enormous heart-shaped leaves are highly ornamental but do not develop any appreciable fall color. The fruits are showy brown pods displayed from mid summer to late winter. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up.



Golden Catalpa
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Golden Catalpa is a deciduous tree with a more or less rounded form. Its strikingly bold and coarse texture can be very effective in a balanced landscape composition.

This tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting hummingbirds to your yard, but is not particularly attractive to deer who tend to leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy

Golden Catalpa is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Golden Catalpa will grow to be about 40 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 7 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is an amazingly adaptable plant, tolerating both dry conditions and even some standing water. It is considered to be drought-tolerant, and thus makes an ideal choice for xeriscaping or the moisture-conserving landscape. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selection of a native North American species.