Basswood

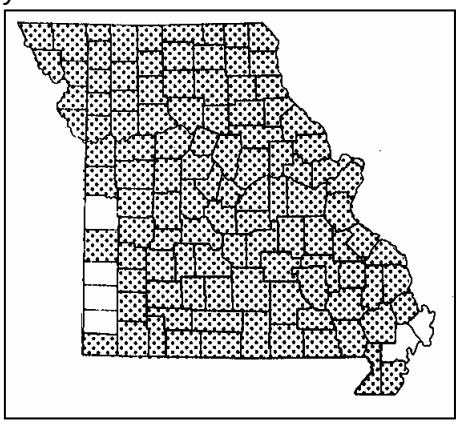
Tilia spp.

Two species of basswood occur in Missouri. American basswood (*T. americana* L.) is most common, but white basswood (*T. heterophylla* Vent.) is also present. The species are not separated commercially. Both species grow best on deep, moist soils. They are use frequently as shade trees.

American basswood, also called linn or lindenwood, is fairly common throughout north Missouri, but also occurs in lesser quantities to the south. Some people prefer to call it “beetree” because honeybees often build their hives in hollow basswood trees. The wood is commonly used to build beehives.

The sapwood is white or creamy white to pale brown. Very little difference exists between the sapwood and heartwood except the heartwood occasionally has darker streaks of brown. The bark is gray in young trees, then turns brown and has long, narrow ridges on older trees. When dry, the wood is without odor or taste and is lightweight with even texture and grain. It is easy to work, though shrinkage in drying is a problem. However, it is stable when dry. Growth rings are fairly distinct and the wood is diffuse porous.

Few woods are used in so many ways. Uses include apiary supplies, venetian blinds, sash and door frames, molding, woodenware, boxes, drawing boards, picture frames, toys, wooden novelties and other objects requiring a clean-looking lightweight wood that finishes well. It is a very popular carving wood and has been used in the automotive industry for patterns. It is an excellent wood for the home workshop, but is not desirable for exposed parts of furniture because it dents rather easily.



Massengale