

Cottonwood seeds in air

By Tim Richard
special writer

IN MICHIGAN we take trees for granted. Only when one travels to parts of the country, where trees are scarce, do we recognize their absence.

In fall, we become more aware of trees because of their brilliant colors. But during the remainder of the year, we become aware of particular trees as they produce flowers or seeds. Recently, while driving around town, I was reminded of the cottonwood tree because there were thousands of little fluffs of "cotton" floating through the air. They were very noticeable when backlit by the sun in the morning and the evening. Attached to each of these fluffs was seed that developed from flowers produced earlier this spring.

EARLY FEMALE flowers on cottonwood trees are similar to pussy willow flowers on willow trees. They grow into long catkins that look like bottlebrushes.

The flowers are pollinated from pollen produced by flowers on separate male trees.

Large groups of female trees produce so many seeds that they can block drains at times. I remember jogging down a street where the seed fluffs were so thick in the air that I had to close my mouth so I would not inhale one.

Producing large numbers of seeds is nature's way of ensuring that some will germinate and grow to maturity. In the case of the cottonwood, many areas are suitable for growth.

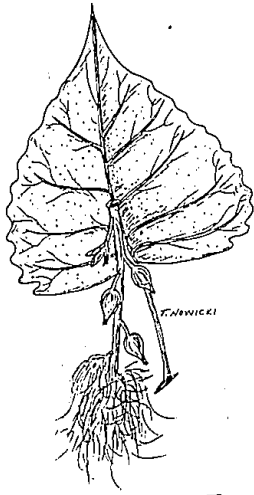
In fact, park systems frequently plant them because they need little care, grow fast, and provide a good amount of shade.

THE LARGE, spade-shaped leaves, with notched borders, often rattle in the wind because the stem of the leaf is flattened and catches the wind like a sail. Some trees have extended their leaves 150 feet in the air.

To support a tree that large, the trunk can measure six feet or more in diameter.

Next time you see some white fluffs in the air, look around, because there may be a cottonwood tree nearby. But don't be hasty. There are several other plants that also produce fluffs to disseminate their seeds.

Timothy Nowicki has a master's degree in biology and is active in several local environmental groups.



Cottonwood trees produce seeds borne through the air by floating fluffs.

class reunions

As a public service and when space permits, the Observer and Eccentric Newspapers will print announcements of class reunions. Send the information to Marie McGee, Observer and Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150. Please include a first and last name with telephone numbers.

REDFORD UNION

Redford Union High School class of 1955 will hold a 20-year reunion at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21, at the Karas House, Redford. For more information, call Margie Heston Bourassa, 464-3642 or Karen Petersen Pilon, 495-0268.

ST. GREGORY

St. Gregory High School class of 1955 is planning a 20-year reunion. For more information, call Marie Hauser, 464-7126.

LINCOLN PARK

Lincoln Park High School class of 1950 will hold a 25-year reunion Aug. 3. For more information, call 283-1283 or 565-7401.

IMMACULATE

Immaculate High School class of 1951 will hold a reunion Saturday, Sept. 28, at the Fox and Hounds, Bloomfield Hills. For more information, call Ghany L'etier, 645-5413 or Lucia Werner, 641-9555 or 585-2000.

FARMINGTON

Farmington High School class of 1950 will hold a five-year reunion on Saturday, Sept. 21, at Roma's of Livonia. For more information or to report the whereabouts of class members, call Stephanie Seebach at 477-4556.

Farmington High School class of 1975 will hold a 10-year reunion Saturday, July 6, at Glen Oaks Country Club. For more information, call 669-9830 or 624-3231.

GROSSE POINTE

Grosse Pointe High School class of 1950

will hold a 25-year reunion June 22 at the Michigan Inn, Southfield. For more information, contact Judy Cooper, 885-3505.

CODY

Cody High School January-June classes of 1955 will hold a weekend reunion Sept. 6-8 at Sugar Loaf Resort. For more information, call Connie Chopp Pair, 421-4450.

NORTH FARMINGTON

North Farmington High School class of 1950 will hold a five-year reunion Saturday, Aug. 3. For more information or to report whereabouts of class members, call Bob Hood, 553-2357.

COUSINO

Cousino High School class of 1975 will hold a 10-year reunion on Saturday, Aug. 31, at Zuccare's, Clinton Township. For more information or to report the whereabouts of classmates, call Glenda Aveslan Karibian at 540-3858.

HENRY FORD

Henry Ford High School class of 1965 is planning a reunion to be held in October at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn. Class members are asked to contact the planning committee after 5 p.m. or on weekends by calling 655-9850 or by mail to Sandy Multhead, 634 Union Street, Milford 48042.

FORDSON

Fordson High School class of 1965 will hold a 20-year reunion Saturday, Aug. 3. For ticket information, call Kathy Malva-so, 565-4799.

PLYMOUTH

Plymouth High School class of 1930 will hold a 55-year reunion Saturday, June 22, at the Mayflower Hotel. Call Lois Dicks, 464-7544 or Evelyn LeFever, 453-5493.

THURSTON

Thurston High School class of 1960 will hold a 25-year reunion. For more information, call Marie Myers Nashon at 981-5561.

BENTLEY

Bentley High School class of 1965 will hold a 20-year reunion on Saturday, Sept. 21 at the Novi Hilton. For more information, call Sandy (Brumm) Rockwood, 591-0783.

DEARBORN

Dearborn High School class of 1955 will hold a 20-year reunion on Saturday, Aug. 3. For more information, call Judy Love at 646-2336.

PLYMOUTH

Plymouth High School class of 1965 will hold a 20-year reunion on Saturday, June 29 in the Plymouth Mayflower Meeting House. There will be a "day after" picnic at 11 a.m. Sunday at Plymouth Township Park for family and friends. For further information, call 453-0022 or 459-3699 or 453-7022.

GARDEN CITY

Garden City High School class of 1955 will hold a reunion on Saturday, July 20. For more information, call 427-0535.

GARDEN CITY EAST

Garden City East High School is planning a 15-year reunion. For more information, call Sylvia Hinzman, 525-3732.

PATCHEN ELEMENTARY

Westland Patchen Elementary School alumni will hold a reunion in July. For more information, call Millie Pangel McCol-lum, 728-7789, or Virginia Dean Lear, 421-9084. Faculty members as well as students are invited.

CLARENCEVILLE

A committee has been formed to gather names, addresses and phone numbers of Clarenceville High School class of 1975 for a fall reunion. Call Bob Scheels with information at 437-9131 or 437-9625.

CHADSEY

Chadsey High School class of 1965 will hold a 20-year reunion Saturday, Aug. 17 in the Palm River Room of the Roostertail. For more information, call Joanne Benbow, 584-2282 or Joyce Herron, 931-7947.

Group plans picnic

A family picnic for the deaf and hearing impaired will be sponsored by Community Services for the Hearing Impaired (CSHI) from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday, June 29, at Independence Oaks County Park, 9501 Sashabaw Road, Clarkston. The park charges a \$2.50 vehicle admission at the gate. Grills are available. Participants are asked to donate \$1.50 per adult and \$1 per child to pay for rental of the facilities. Information about CSHI is available at 332-3323 in Pentiac.

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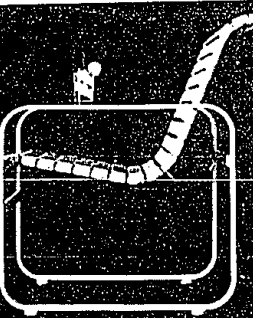
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