



TILIA CORDATA

Fam. Tiliaceae

DESCRIPTION

Tree with an elegant habit, resistant to droughts and bad weather. A long-lived plant (it lives more than 200 years), in full vegetative development, *Tilia cordata* can grow up to 30 meters tall. The crown, generally domed, is made up of numerous branches covered with thick, very decorative foliage.

HABITAT

Native to the northern hemisphere, it grows spontaneously in damp and cool woods.

DISTRIBUTION

In Italy, it is cultivated as an isolated ornamental plant or in groups, up to 1000 meters above sea level; it also grows spontaneously in the Italian woods.

FLOWERS

Fragrant and light-yellow coloured, they are very small and bundled in hanging clusters of 4 to 15 units each carried on elongated peduncles; they are hermaphroditic and rich in nectar (they attract bees). The lime tree blooms from late spring to summer – generally, from June to July.

LEAVES

Deciduous leaves, typically heart-shaped and finely serrated, dark-green and glossy on the upper face, lighter on the lower face. The underside has tufts of rust-coloured down in the axil of the ribs, at the base of the leaf. In autumn, the leaves turn a splendid yellow colour before falling off.

FRUITS

Oval-shaped green pods that turn brown when ripe.

SEEDS

Piccoli, scuri e, per lo più oblungi.

BARK

Smooth and grey in younger vegetation, it tends to get darker and cracked over time.

INTERESTING FACTS

All parts of the lime tree are edible: the most tender sprouts can be eaten like spinach: boiled, stir-fried, deep-fried or as a filling for quiches. Fresh leaves are excellent in salads and can also be cooked in soups or as a filling for Rustici (savory pastries). The seeds are used for the production of vegetable oil with a flavour similar to that of extra virgin olive oil. The oldest lime tree in Italy – 34 metres tall and with a trunk of 8 meters in circumference – is located in Piazza Alessio De Vito, a square in Summonte, a small town in the province of Avellino. Due to its longevity, it is considered the symbol of the Irpinian town and one of the veteran trees of Italy.

ROOTS

Robust root system that holds the tree firmly anchored to the ground.

