

# Cladrastis kentukea

## Yellowwood, Kentucky yellowwood, American yellowwood, Vigilia



*Cladrastis kentukea* (Yellowwood, synonym: *Cladrastis lutea*, synonym: *Cladrastis tinctoria*) grows in forests in the south-eastern United States, along with trees including *Aesculus flava*, *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Tilia americana*. The tree was discovered by the French botanist André Michaux in March 1796. The name *Cladrastis* comes from the two Greek words *klados* (branch) and *thraustos* (fragile), denoting the species' fragile branches. *Cladrastis kentukea* is a beautiful, medium-sized tree that can reach heights of up to 18 metres with a short trunk. In cultivation, its height is often limited to 12 metres. Yellowwood has a semi-open, round to wide flattened crown with low branches.

*Cladrastis kentukea* has compound, obovate leaves that bud light green and blooms beautiful fragrant, white legume racemes in June. Bees love it! Its golden yellow autumn colours and contrasting violet-grey bark are beautiful. The tree is called Yellowwood because of the characteristic yellow colour of its freshly broken or sawed branches. In autumn, *Cladrastis kentukea* bears striking, brown-green legumes.

Yellowwoods are perfect for use as an impressive statement in parks and large gardens. The species has a strong root system and few soil requirements. *Cladrastis kentukea* originated in valleys with hot micro-climates, where it grows in permeable, moist and often lime-rich soil. But it will also easily thrive in acidic soil. As a legume, the tree fixes nitrogen to the ground, fertilising the soil. Yellowwoods prefer an environment sheltered from wind with some shade to prevent sunburn. *Cladrastis kentukea* requires little maintenance. If you do wish to prune it, it is best to do so during the summer months. In winter, pruning will make the tree bleed.

### SEASONAL COLOURS



### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

### USE

**Location:** park, central reservation, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement:** none | **Planting concepts:** Eco planting, Prairie planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** rounded, flattened spherical | **Crown structure:** semi-open | **Height:** 9 - 12 m | **Width:** 9 - 12 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4A - 8B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level:** low in nutrients, moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Host plant/forage plant:** bees, nectar value 3, pollen value 0 | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** raceme, papilionaceous, striking, pendulous, scented | **Flower colour:** white | **Flowering period:** June - July | **Leaf colour:** bright green, buds pale green | **Leaves:** deciduous, obovate, composite, Nitrogen fixing | **Autumn colour:** golden yellow | **Fruits:** striking, pod | **Fruit colour:** brown-green | **Bark colour:** violet-grey | **Bark:** smooth, later on rough | **Twig colour:** grey-brown | **Twigs:** bare | **Root system:** deep, extensive, fleshy roots