

# *Gymnocladus dioica*

## Kentucky coffee tree, Chicot



*Gymnocladus dioica* (Kentucky coffee tree) originated in the United States, where it is widely distributed but rare. *Gymnocladus dioica* naturally grows on moist slopes or in the flood plains of rivers, where the tree can reach a mature height of 30 metres. In cultivation, the Kentucky coffee tree grows slowly, but eventually it can reach heights of 20 metres, with an oval, semi-open to open irregular crown. *Gymnocladus dioica* gets its name from the Greek words *gymnos* (naked) and *klados* (branch), which refers to its thick branches that particularly stand out in winter. *Dioicus* literally means 'two houses': there are male and female specimens.

The leaves of the Kentucky coffee tree bud bronze in spring, then turn light green with beautiful red petioles and in autumn, they are a beautiful bright yellow. The decorative leaves grow up to 80 centimetres, are doubly pinnate and mainly grow on the outside of the crown, creating a transparent umbrella shape in older trees. After the leaves fall, the petioles stay on the tree for a while. *Gymnocladus dioica* bloom long racemes of star-shaped, fragrant white flowers in June, from which striking large, toxic, grey-blue legumes grow. The decorative legumes stay on the tree for a long time in winter. The irregular, furrowed trunk of the Kentucky coffee tree is very decorative.

*Gymnocladus dioica* tolerates hot summers and cold winters, enabling it to properly handle an urban climate. The species has very deep roots, has no diseases and is quite wind-proof and is thus not only suitable for use in parks and large gardens, but also in squares, streets and avenues. Do ensure a decent, underground growth environment. The Kentucky coffee tree prefers fertile soil, such as river clay, loam and loess. But it also thrives in lighter sand soil. For the best growth, plant *Gymnocladus dioica* in a sunny to lightly shaded environment.

### SEASONAL COLOURS



### TYPES OF PLANTING

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

### USE

**Location:** park, central reservation, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones | **Pavement:** none, open, sealed | **Planting concepts:** Climate planting, Solid planting, Prairie planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** wide oval | **Crown structure:** open | **Height:** 15 - 20 m | **Width:** 6 - 9 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 5A - 8B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** slightly tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil, all soils | **Nutrient level:** 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 1, pollen value 0 | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to salt spray, tolerant to dryness, tolerates air pollution, tolerates heat

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** raceme, star-shaped, striking, pendulous, big, scented | **Flower colour:** white, green | **Flowering period:** June - June | **Leaf colour:** buds bronze, matt green | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovoid, big, bipinnate, composite, Nitrogen fixing | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** striking, toxic, large, frosty, pod | **Fruit colour:** brown, grey-blue | **Bark colour:** grey-black | **Bark:** deeply furrowed | **Twig colour:** grey-blue | **Twigs:** frosty, thickly branched, short shoots | **Root system:** deep, extensive, tap root, root suckers