American Yellowwood
(*Cladrastis kentukea* (prior name *C. lutea*))

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**Summary**

**Foliage:** Deciduous broadleaf  
**Height:** 50 feet  
**Spread:** 55 feet  
**Shape:** Vase-shaped  
This vase-shaped medium tree has smooth bark and showy white flowers in the spring. It is also quite drought and alkaline soil tolerant.

**Plant Needs**

**Zone:** 4 to 9  
**Light:** Partial shade to full sun  
**Moisture:** Moist to dry  
**Soil Type:** Sandy, loam, or clay loam  
**pH Range:** 4.5 to 8.0

**Functions**

Suggested uses for this plant include shade tree and specimen plant.

**Planting Notes**

Plant in well-drained, moist soil, preferably in full sun. Tolerates wide range of soil pH.

**Care**

Prune only in summer. Winter or spring pruning results in profuse bleeding. This species typically has a branch structure (tight branch angles) that results in limbs breaking from the tree. To avoid this, develop a good branch system in the tree’s early life; as the tree ages, remove about 10% of small branches every other year to lighten the load of the major branch system. Remove dead or damaged wood as soon as possible.

**Problems**

No serious disease or insect problems.

**Alternatives**

Consult garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.  
Cultivars of *Cladrastis kentukea*  
‘Rosea’ (‘Perkins Pink’) is a pink flowered cultivar.
**Comments**

American yellowwood is a medium-sized tree with very showy, pendulous white, pea-like flowers in late spring. This species will bloom heavily every other year. Even in years of a light bloom, it is prized for its form and tolerance of adverse conditions.

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