

# Dr. *Nancy* BECKER

EARS, NOSE & THROAT ☎ ALLERGY THERAPY ☎ FACIAL PLASTIC SURGERY

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## Fremont's Cottonwood

**Family:** Salicacea  
**Genus:** Populus  
**Species:** Fremontii

**Common Names:** Fremont Cottonwood  
Common Cottonwood  
California Cottonwood

**Pollen Grains:** Spheroidal or somewhat deformed, 27 to 34 inches in diameter. Grains are without germinal furrows or pores. Exine thin and fragmentary appearing as a granular network thinly covering intine.

**Pollinating Period:** February to March

**Distribution:** Below 6000 feet from Sacramento Valley in California southward into Lower California. Arizona cottonwood, a species so similar it is sometimes considered a variety of *P. Fremontii*, is found in desert regions of California, Arizona and Nevada.

**Allergic Importance:** Important in regions of abundance.

Fremont's cottonwood is a large tree to 100 feet with trunk diameters up to 5 and 6 feet. Bark is white, rough furrowed and cracked. Twigs are stoutish. Bright green leaves are irregularly and coarsely toothed with a sharp-pointed apex. The petioles are flattened.

Fremont's cottonwood was selected to illustrate the characteristics of its genus, the commonly termed poplars, cottonwoods, and aspens. Male and female flowers occur on separate trees. The inflorescence is a catkin. The staminate catkin is pendulous consisting of many stamens which are frequently rather colorful in shades of red and yellow. Pollination occurs just before the opening of the leaf buds. The pistillate catkins are greenish comprised of a loose series of pistils which develop into a capsule fruit, each capsule subtended by a cup-shaped disk. At maturity the capsules split open to release the cotton in which the small seeds are embedded.

There are 15 species of *Populus* native to North America. Several introduced species are widely used ornamentally. To these add a few hybrids and numerous horticultural varieties and the result is some confusion in the nomenclature of the group.