

## Wood of The Month

### Aspen – Populus tremuloides



Brought to our attention by the nicely turned lidded vessel of aspen by member Bob Kostecka, aspen is, believe it or not, a native tree of Missouri. However, it mainly only grows in the very northern parts of Missouri. It is one of the most widely distributed trees in North America; occurring from sea level to an altitude of 10,000 feet. From Texas west to California, east to West Virginia and Pennsylvania, and north to Canada and Alaska. Extending southward in the mountains of Mexico.

*Populus tremuloides* is a deciduous tree that also goes by the common names; aspen, golden aspen, mountain aspen, quiverleaf aspen, Quakie, quaking aspen, trembling aspen, trembling poplar, white poplar and popple. As the name implies, it is a poplar in the same group as the poplars. The ‘trembling’ names are derived from the shaking and trembling action of the leaves by the slightest breeze. The wood tends to be light brown. Wide sapwood is pale yellow to nearly white, and isn’t clearly demarcated, tending to gradually blend into the heartwood. It is straight grained with fine and even texture and faint growth ring figure. It has short fibers and relatively low strength. It works well but requires very sharp tools to avoid the wood from developing a “woolly” surface, and sanding may have a tendency to cause the “fuzzing” effects. When turning aspen it is advisable to use dust collection because of the fine dust generated especially when sanding.

Trembling aspen is largely used for pulp and panel products such as waferboard, oriented strandboard and other forms of particleboard. The lumber is used for furniture, interior trim, pallets, boxes, crates, clothespins, and matches. Highly figured aspen is used for decorative veneers, including marquetry work.

*You can read more about aspen at; [Aspen on the Wood-database](#) and [Aspen on Wikipedia.org](#).*

*Written by – Mel Bryan*