



Ben Franklin Tree White flowers

☀️🌳 **Franklinia alatamaha 15x20**

Franklinia alatamaha, or Ben Franklin Tree - located in Ben Franklin Bed Zones 6-9 Creamy White Flowers with Bright Egg-Yolk Yellow Stamens Full sun, part shade Deciduous Tree or Shrub with Good Fall Color Water regularly Well-drained Acid to Neutral Soil Resents Transplanting 15'x20'

Boasting creamy white blossoms in late summer, this historical native multi-stemmed tree deserves a prominent location in the landscape. Dark green leaves turn orange and red in the fall, often in combination with a few late flowers. Subtly striped branches and persistent seed capsules add winter interest. Makes an ideal specimen tree or large shrub.

Franklinia is a monotypic genus in the tea or camellia family, Theaceae. The sole species in this genus is a flowering tree, *Franklinia alatamaha*, commonly called the Ben Franklin tree.

Franklinia alatamaha, commonly called Ben Franklin tree, typically grows as a single-trunk tree with a rounded crown or as a multi-stemmed shrub. As a single trunk tree, it can grow to 20' tall or more, but is more often seen growing much shorter. Camellia-like, cup-shaped, 5-petaled, sweetly-fragrant, white flowers (to 3" diameter), which sport bright egg-yolk yellow stamens, bloom in late summer to early fall. Narrow, oblong-obovate, glossy dark green leaves (to 5" long) turn shades of orange, red and purple in autumn.

John Bartram was appointed Royal Botanist for North America by King George III in 1765. In that same year, John Bartram and his son William discovered franklinia growing in a 2-3 acre tract along the banks of the Altamaha River in southeastern Georgia. Franklinia has never been observed growing in any other place than along the Altamaha River. In a return trip in 1773, William Bartram collected seed from this site and brought it back to the Bartram's garden in Philadelphia where the tree was successfully grown.

This tree has been extinct in the wild since 1803. It has been perpetuated in cultivation (all plants derive from the seed collected by Bartram) not only because of its rarity but also because of its attractive flowers and foliage. The current genetic base of this plant is quite narrow in large part because all plants currently in existence in the world come from the materials collected by the Bartrams. *Franklinia* belongs to the tea family and is closely related to *Stewartia* and *Gordonia* (loblolly bay).

It is not known why this tree disappeared in the wild. Land along the Altamaha River was cleared for cotton plantations leading to one theory that a cotton pathogen found in the soil (carried downstream through erosion) was the main cause of the extinction of the colony. Other extinction theories include decline from climate change, destruction by man, single colony of plants was not genetically diverse enough to withstand pathogens or changing conditions, or a local disaster (flood or fire).

Genus name honors Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), American printer, scientist, philosopher and statesman.

Specific epithet name has an extra "a" in it (apparently because of an alternate spelling for the river when the tree was named).

<https://www.monrovia.com/franklin-tree.html>

<https://www.finegardening.com/plant/franklin-tree-franklinia-alatamaha>

<https://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?kempercode=q160>