

## 2015 June *Guess that Plant*



*Catalpa speciosa* Warder, Catawba-tree

The June *Guess that Plant* is a difficult identification even with a specimen in the hand, so as long as you guessed *Catalpa* you are close enough! The plant in the photo is actually *Catalpa speciosa*. This species produces large thin leaves with a prolonged drip tip, described by Fernald as “long-tapering” with large upright panicles of whitish flowers. The lower lip of the flower is bifurcate. This is a difficult clue unless you unfurl many corollas. The flowers are visible in June, and the long seedpods form soon after. This plant differs from its relative, Common Catawba, *Catalpa bignonioides*, by its long attenuate leaf tip, fewer interior corolla spots and no lower lip notch. Each feature has some intermediate physical expression suggesting these species are less distinct than formally described.