Kentucky Coffee Tree is a medium to large tree with doubly-pinnately compound leaves, distinctive irregularly fractured bark, and stout twigs. The Latin name 'Gymnocladus' means 'naked branch', and is a reference to the stubby, barren branching structure of the species.

Tolerant of pollution and other urban conditions, Kentucky Coffee Tree has successfully been planted in northeastern Illinois for many years. It continues to be a recommended species to plant with an eye toward increasingly hot summers. They can be found in parks and on parkways throughout the Chicago region.

A true legume, some trees will bear pods up to ten inches long and two inches wide. Confederate soldiers during the civil war were alleged to have used the pods' contents to brew a coffee-like beverage, hence the tree's common name.

For more information on this species, please contact trees@openlands.org.