



AMERICAN ELM *Ulmus americana* L.



American elm is one of our largest and most graceful trees; it occurs throughout the state, although its numbers have been severely reduced by Dutch elm disease. It is found most often on rich bottomland and moist soil along streams, but sometimes grows on higher ground. It grows quickly, attaining a height of 60–70 feet and a diameter of 2–4 feet.

The trunk often divides into numerous limbs, which form a vase-shaped or spreading, round-topped head with graceful, drooping branches.

The number of American elms in Maine has been severely reduced by Dutch elm disease.





The **bark** on the trunk is separated into broad ridges by deep fissures and is ashy-gray on the surface. It shows alternate layers of chocolate brown and buff coloration beneath.

The **leaves** are alternate, 3–6 inches long, with coarsely doubly-toothed margins and uneven bases. The upper surface is dark green and sandpaper-like.

The **flowers** appear in April before the leaves.

The **fruit** consists of a small, winged seed which ripens about the end of May, before the leaves have fully developed. It has a wide, open notch at the apex and a hairy margin.

The **wood** is spiral and coarse-grained, hard, heavy, strong, tough and hard to split. It is used for flooring, railroad ties and pulp. In the past it was used to make barrel hoops, barn stall flooring, door thresholds and wheel hubs.

Slippery elm, *Ulmus rubra* Muhl, has been recorded in Franklin and York counties, but these records are historical. A few specimens have been found in association with cultural settings, but it is not known if these populations are native or escaped. If it still occurs naturally in the state, it is undoubtedly quite rare. Slippery elm is most easily distinguished from American elm by the winter buds which are covered with rusty hairs. In the past, the inner bark of the slippery elm was chewed to relieve sore throats.



American elm twigs have a zigzag pattern and slightly flattened buds.



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American Elm Circumference: 244" Height: 110' Crown Spread: 120' Location: Yarmouth

