

Learning about Green Ash

Fraxinus pennsylvanica

Green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) is a wide spread native ash tree in North America. This tree lives in swamps, flood plains and open woodlands, and often grows in areas with poor growing conditions.

Characteristics. Green ash can grow up to 70 feet tall and has a canopy diameter of about 40-50 feet. Its compound leaves are bright green, pinnate in form and reach six to nine inches long. Each leaf has five to eight leaflets on each leaf stem. The leaflets can be from two to five inches long and can have smooth or toothed edges. Green ash is deciduous, with the leaves changing to yellow in the fall before falling to the ground. Once transplanted, this tree grows rapidly. It likes full sun and has trouble growing in shady conditions.

Fruit. There are both male and female trees in this species. The flowers are small and not very noticeable in the spring. In the female trees, the flowers grow into narrow, paddle-shaped seeds called samaras in the autumn. Each samara contains one seed. The samaras usually hang in clumps and are green when young. The seeds eventually turn light brown and are dispersed over the winter.

Geographic Range. The native range of the green ash extends from Nova Scotia west to southeastern Alberta (Canada), south through Montana and Wyoming, to southeastern Texas and east to northwestern Florida and Georgia.

Additional Information.

- Green ash is a member of the Olive (Oleaceae) family.
- Green ash has a high tolerance for flooding and some degree of tolerance for salt spray.
- Birds like to eat the seeds as do many other types of wildlife, such as wild turkey and rodents.
- The wood of the green ash is used for baseball bats and tool handles because it is strong, hard, and has excellent bending qualities and shock resistance.
- Other names for the green ash include water ash, swamp ash, and red ash.
- The bark is smooth and gray on young green ash, but as the tree matures the bark thickens and develops a diamond shape appearance in the rough ridges and valleys of the bark.
- The green ash is related to the fringetrees, forsythias, privets, and lilacs.

References:

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