

American Elm

Ulmus americana

Secondary Names:

White Elm

Leaf Type: Deciduous

Texas Native:

Firewise:

Tree Description:

A large tree to 90 feet tall and a trunk diameter to 3 feet, with a buttressed base and upright branches that form a spreading, vase-shaped crown.

Range/Site Description:

Occurs across a vast area of the eastern U.S., into East and Central Texas, occurring naturally on well-drained soils along streams and rivers, but also planted widely as a shade tree.

Leaf:

Alternate, simple, 4" to 6" long and 2" to 3" wide, oval or ovate in shape, tip drawn to a point, lopsided at the base, and double-toothed along the margin; leaf surface is either smooth or rough above and pubescent or smooth below, with raised veins.

Flower:

Appearing before the leaves in early spring as small, greenish clusters on slender stalks in the axils of the leaves.

Fruit:

An oval "samara" (winged fruit), with the seed portion in the center surrounded entirely by a wing with a fuzzy edge, ripening in the spring. The hairs on the samara margin and the deep notch in the end are characteristic of the species.

Bark:

Dark gray, divided into irregular flat-topped, thick ridges, with narrow fissures between. An incision into an outer ridge of bark will show alternating brown and cream colored layers.

Wood:

Heavy, hard, strong, tough, and difficult to split; once used for wheel hubs, saddle trees, veneer for baskets and crates, and furniture parts.

Similar Species:

Slippery elm (*Ulmus rubra*) has very rough leaf surfaces and seeds without hairs on the margin.

Interesting Facts:

This species was the most common street tree in America at the beginning of the 20th Century, but was almost wiped out by Dutch Elm Disease.



Blackgum

Nyssa sylvatica

Secondary Names:

Black Tupelo, Sourgum, Sour Gum

Leaf Type: Deciduous

Texas Native:

Firewise:

Tree Description:

A large forest tree reaching a height of over 100 feet and a trunk that exceeds 3 feet in diameter, with a straight trunk and many horizontal branches of a similar size that form a narrow, oval crown.

Range/Site Description:

Occurs in East Texas, usually in moist, well-drained soils, but also on dry slopes with a variety of oaks.

Leaf:

Simple, alternate, 2" to 6" long and 1" to 3" wide, oval to elliptical or even oblong, leaf edge without teeth; leaves are shiny, dark green on top, turning brilliant red, orange, and purple in the fall.

Flower:

Male and female flowers borne on separate trees or the same tree as long, slender clusters when the leaves are about one-third grown; the male in many-flowered heads, and the female in two or several-flowered clusters.

Fruit:

A dark blue drupe, 0.5" long, oval, containing a single hard-shelled stone, borne 2 to 3 in a cluster on a stalk 1" to 2.5" long.

Bark:

Smooth and gray on younger trees, developing furrows and flat ridges as the tree ages, with older bark light gray and broken into thick, distinctly squarish blocks.

Wood:

Very tough, cross-grained, not durable in contact with the soil, hard to work, and warps easily; used for crossties, basket veneer, box boards, and paper pulp.

Similar Species:

Both water tupelo (*Nyssa aquatica*) and swamp tupelo (*N. biflora*) occur in areas of standing water in East Texas and have buttressed trunks. Two-wing silverbell (*Halesia diptera*) is an understory tree with showy white flowers in spring.

Interesting Facts:

In the old days, the hollow trunks were cut in sections and used to make bee hives; the flowers produce an excellent "tupelo honey."



Copyright © Robert O'Brien

Pond Cypress

Taxodium ascendens

Pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*) is closely related to Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*). However, pond cypress typically prefers a more isolated, thriftier life style. For example, Bald cypress thrives in communal linear swamps along nutrient rich rivers, but pond cypress is most frequently found in isolated depressions feed by nutrient poor, shallow ground water.

On average more than a quarter of the area of Florida's flatwoods is pocketed with shallow depressions, and these depressions have conditions that are ideal habitat for pond cypress. The depressions are fed by slowly seeping, acidic ground water and typically dry up once or twice a year. By contrast, bald cypress is found in higher pH, moving water, that doesn't dry up very often. Fire is more frequent in the dryer pond cypress habitat and pond cypress has thicker, fire resistant bark. However, both pond and bald cypress need a dry period for successful seed sprouting and survival.

Both cypresses are known for their "knees" and buttressed trunks, but the biological function of these is as yet undetermined. Some studies have reported that they serve to supply oxygen to the roots of the trees and also anchor and support the tree in an unstable environment. Typically pond cypress have fewer knees and less buttressing than bald cypress.

Identifying Characteristics

Size/Form:

Similar to bald cypress, but slower growing

Leaves:

Similar to bald cypress but the needles are pressed against the stem. Young pond cypress may have leaves similar to bald cypress.

Fruit:

The fruit is a round cone that is about $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" in diameter. They are wrinkled, green, and leathery. Upon maturity the cones become woody. The shield-shaped scales fit closely together before the cone disintegrates.

Bark:

Similar to bald cypress but thicker.

Habitat:

Depressions mixed in with the flatwoods, feed by nutrient poor, acidic, shallow ground water.





Chickasaw Plum

Prunus angustifolia

The Chickasaw Plum tree, *Prunus angustifolia*, is a deciduous multi-stemmed shrub or small tree which occurs in thickets, pastures, fields, fencerows, stream banks and disturbed areas. Chickasaw Plum trees are sometimes seen as a small short-trunked tree growing to 25' tall. Beautiful 5-petaled white flowers appear along the stems in March before the foliage emerges. Flowers are followed by small, cherry-like, edible,

red to yellow plums which ripen in early to mid summer. Although the plums may be eaten raw, they are somewhat tart and acidic, and are perhaps best used in preserves and jellies.

The toothed, narrow, bright green leaves (1-3" long) appear on branches and twigs that are an attractive reddish-brown and sometimes have thorny lateral branchlets. Native Americans regularly consumed the fruit fresh or dried it for winter. The sweet fruit is eaten by deer, bear, fox and racoon. This flowering tree is a true ornamental.

Plant Facts

Family	Prunus angustifolia
Foliage	Green
Mature Height	15 - 25 feet
Mature Spread	15 - 25 feet
Soil	Widely Adaptable
Zones	5-9
Moisture	Drought Tolerant
Mature Form	Round Clump
Growth Rate	Rapid
Sun Exposure	Full Sun - Partial Sun
Flower Color	White and Pink
Fall Color	Yellow



WILD PEAR

Pyrus communis

Physical Characteristics

Pyrus communis is a deciduous Tree growing to 13 m (42ft 8in).

It is hardy to zone 4 and is not frost tender. It is in flower from Apr to May, and the seeds ripen from Oct to December. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects.

Suitable for: light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils, prefers well-drained soil and can grow in heavy clay soil. Suitable pH: acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It can grow in semi-shade (light woodland) or no shade. It prefers moist soil and can tolerate drought. It can tolerate atmospheric pollution.



Habitats

Woodland Garden Secondary; Sunny Edge; Dappled Shade;

Edible Uses

Edible Parts: Fruit.

Edible Uses:

Fruit - raw or cooked[2, 5]. The fruit of wild pears often remains very hard unless bletted[186]. It is more suitable for use in pies etc. The fruit is up to 5cm long[200].

Medicinal Uses



Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.

Astringent; Febrifuge; Sedative.

Cultivation details

Prefers a good well-drained loam in full sun[1, 200]. Grows well in heavy clay soils. Tolerates light shade but does not fruit so well in such a position. Tolerates atmospheric pollution, excessive moisture and a range of soil types, if they are moderately fertile[200], avoiding only the most acid soils[186]. Dislikes very exposed positions[186]. Established plants are drought tolerant[200]. A very hardy plant, tolerating temperatures down to below -15°C[200]. Plants often sucker and can form dense thickets[186]. A parent of the cultivated pear, possibly by crossing with *P. nivalis* and *P. cordata*[11]. There are many hundreds of varieties of cultivated pears and they are widely cultivated in the temperate zone for their edible fruits. By selection of varieties fresh fruits can be obtained from late July to April or May of the following year.

Propagation

Seed - best sown in a cold frame as soon as it is ripe in the autumn, it will then usually germinate in mid to late winter. Stored seed requires 8 - 10 weeks cold stratification at 1°C and should be sown as early in the year as possible[200]. Temperatures over 15 - 20°C induce a secondary dormancy in the seed[200]. Prick out the seedlings into individual pots when they are large enough to handle and grow them on in light shade in a cold frame or greenhouse for their first year. Plant them out in late spring or early summer of the following year.