

American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*)

This massive tree will slowly reach a height and spread of 50 or more feet. Forest grown trees reach up to 120 feet.

The tree is naturally low-branched with attractive glossy green leaves providing deep, inviting shade. Little grows in the dense shade of a Beech tree but if low branches are left on the tree no ground cover or grass is needed.

In the fall, the leaves turn bronze but weather to a light tan color. Some leaves are held late into the winter if not blown off by the wind.

The thin, smooth, silvery-gray bark is quite ornamental. The bark looks like elephant skin on older specimens.

The four tiny nuts in each spiny bur of this American native are much prized by birds and various mammals, including man.

The wood is almost white and is used most often in toys, cookware, furniture and for barrels which age beer. The tree is very resistant to decay under water so it was used to make water wheels in Colonial times. The wood is also used for tool handles, chairs, cuttings boards, and for making charcoal.

Information Source:

Gilman, E. F. and Watson, D.G. (1993). *Fagus grandifolia: American Beech*. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st243>

Photos by: Alicia Lamborn

