

Eastern Hophornbeam

(Ostrya virginiana)

This shade-tolerant tree slowly grows to 50 feet in height with a 25 to 30-foot spread but is often 25 to 40 feet tall, forming an oval or round canopy.

The leaves of Hophornbeam are a nice dark green turning a lovely yellow color in the fall. The bark is an attractive orange or grayish brown, peeling off in longitudinal strips.



Flowers are not particularly showy and are monoecious (reddish-brown male flowers and greenish female flowers appear in separate catkins on the same tree). The female catkins are followed by drooping clusters of sac-like, seed-bearing pods which, as the common name suggests, somewhat resemble the fruit of hops (shown left).

This is a rugged tree, tolerant of poor soil conditions found in urban areas and should be grown and planted more. Trees can be purchased as a single or multi-trunked specimen. Multi-stemmed trees have a dramatic impact in the landscape with bright bark and wonderful form. The species is great for climbing.

Hophornbeam has a shallow root system and will grow in most soils except those that are wet. Often found on dry, rocky slopes with little soil, Hophornbeam is quite tolerant of drought and needs little care once established.



Information Source:

Gilman, E. F. and Watson, D.G. (1993). *Ostrya virginiana: American Hophornbeam*. University of Florida. <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st428>

Photos by: Alicia Lamborn