

# MDTS Tree Trail





# **Tree Trail Project**

## **Goal:**

To explore how the Woodland Loop Trail could include an educational / interpretive function of interest to all ages to showcase the diversity of local tree species.

## **Objectives:**

1. To place interpretive placards on selected iconic trees on the current trail.
2. To provide a recreational and educational resource for the community.
3. To inform the general public about the ecological and cultural significance of selected trees.



## Types of trees you will see marked along this trail

**Keystone:** A *native species* that has a disproportionately large role and impact in the ecosystem compared to its abundance or biomass. Keystone species are vital to maintaining biodiversity and the overall health of ecosystems, making them a focus of conservation efforts. (e.g. host species for pollinators, butterflies or moths).

**Native:** A *species* that naturally occurs and has evolved in a specific geographic region or ecosystem without human intervention. (e.g. Eastern White Cedar).

**Pioneer:** A *native species* that is one of the first to colonise and establish itself in a previously uninhabited or disturbed environment. (e.g. Staghorn Sumac).

**Alien:** A *non-native species* that has been intentionally or unintentionally introduced into an ecosystem or region where it is not native. It may or may not be also invasive or harmful.

**Invasive:** An *alien (non-native) species* that has been introduced into a new environment where it rapidly reproduces and spreads, often outcompeting native species and causing harm to the local ecosystem. (e.g. Common Buckthorn).

# American Elm

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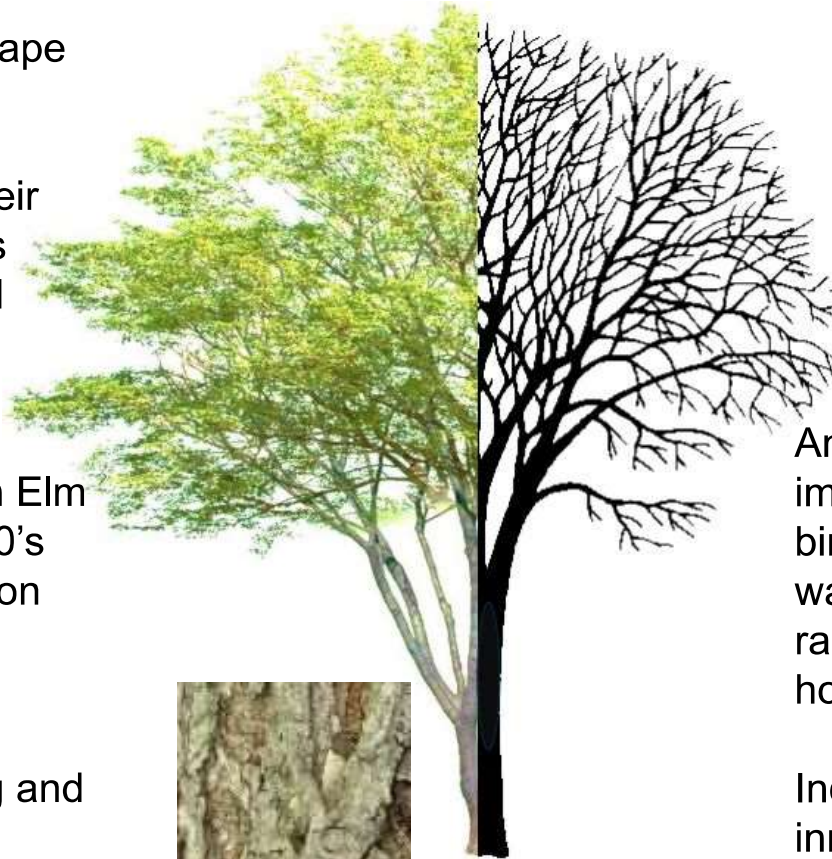
Orme d'Amérique

American Elm was once a dominant feature of the landscape in Eastern Canada.

These elms were known for their vase-like shape, with branches gracefully arching outward and upward.

Dutch Elm Disease, a fungal infection, devastated American Elm populations starting in the 1930's and quickly led to near extinction for this tree.

Conservation organizations continue to work on preserving and restoring American Elm populations by developing disease-resistant strains and promoting awareness about the importance of protecting this iconic species.



American Elm trees provide important nesting habitats for birds such as robins, orioles and warblers, while squirrels and raccoons seek shelter in their hollowed-out trunks.

Indigenous Peoples used the inner bark to make poultices for treating wounds, while its flexible wood was fashioned into bows and other implements.

*American Elm is a Native Keystone Species.*

*Ulmus americana*





# Amur Maple

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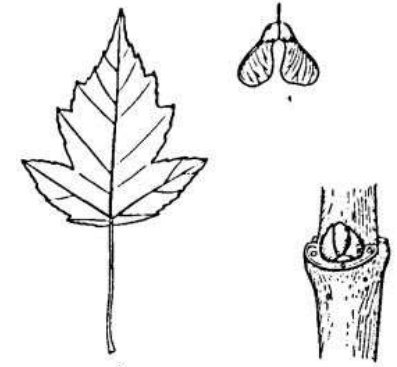
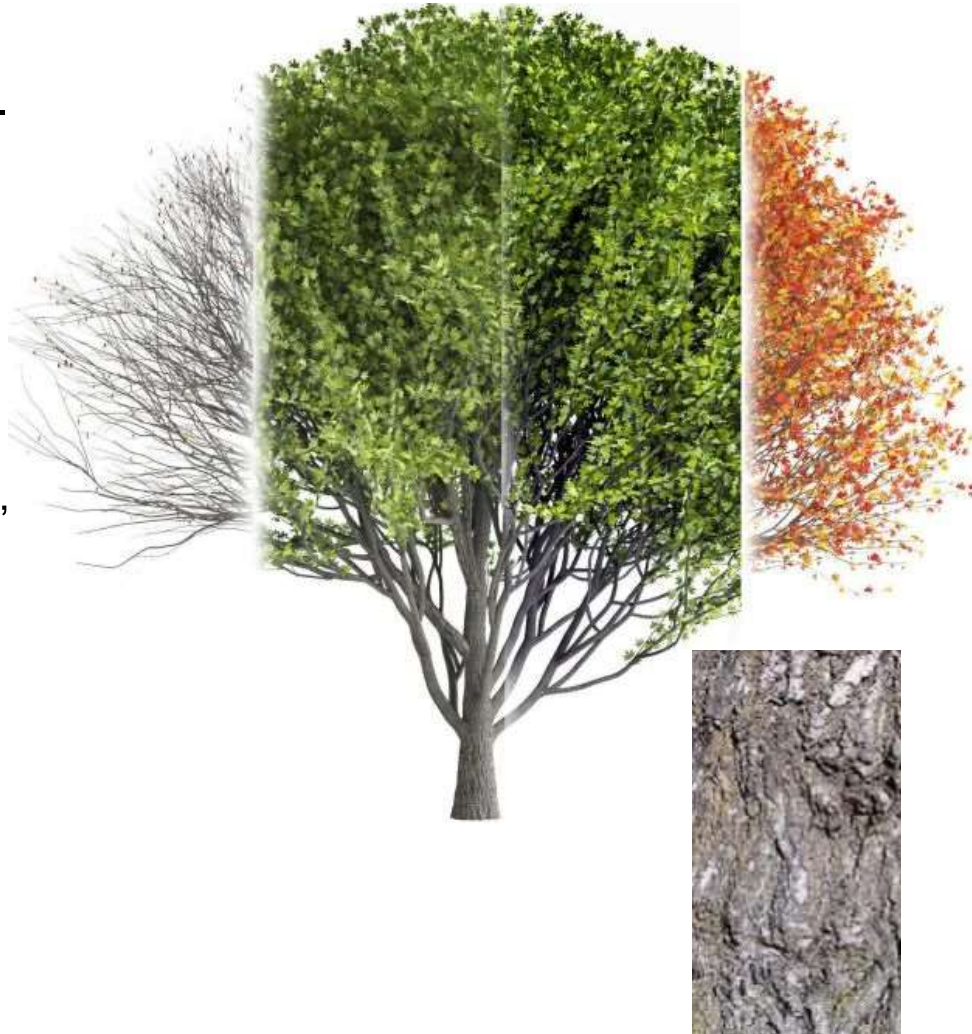
Érable ginnala

Amur Maple is a small deciduous tree or large shrub native to East Asia.

The foliage turns vibrant shades of red, orange, and yellow in the fall.

In spring, it produces small, fragrant flowers, then many winged seeds, known as samaras, which are dispersed by the wind.

Birds are attracted to its seeds, while butterflies and other pollinators visit its flowers.



Due to its invasiveness, Amur Maple may require management in some areas to prevent it from spreading uncontrollably.

This may include pruning, removal of seedlings, or replacement with non-invasive species in sensitive habitats.

*Amur Maple is an alien and possibly invasive species.*

*Acer ginnala*

Learn more about this tree



# Balsam Poplar

zaat

Peuplier baumier

Balsam Poplar is a deciduous tree.

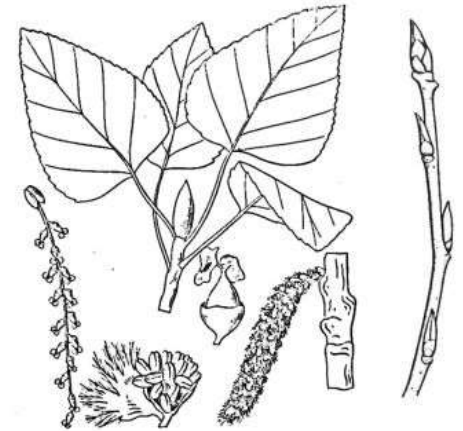
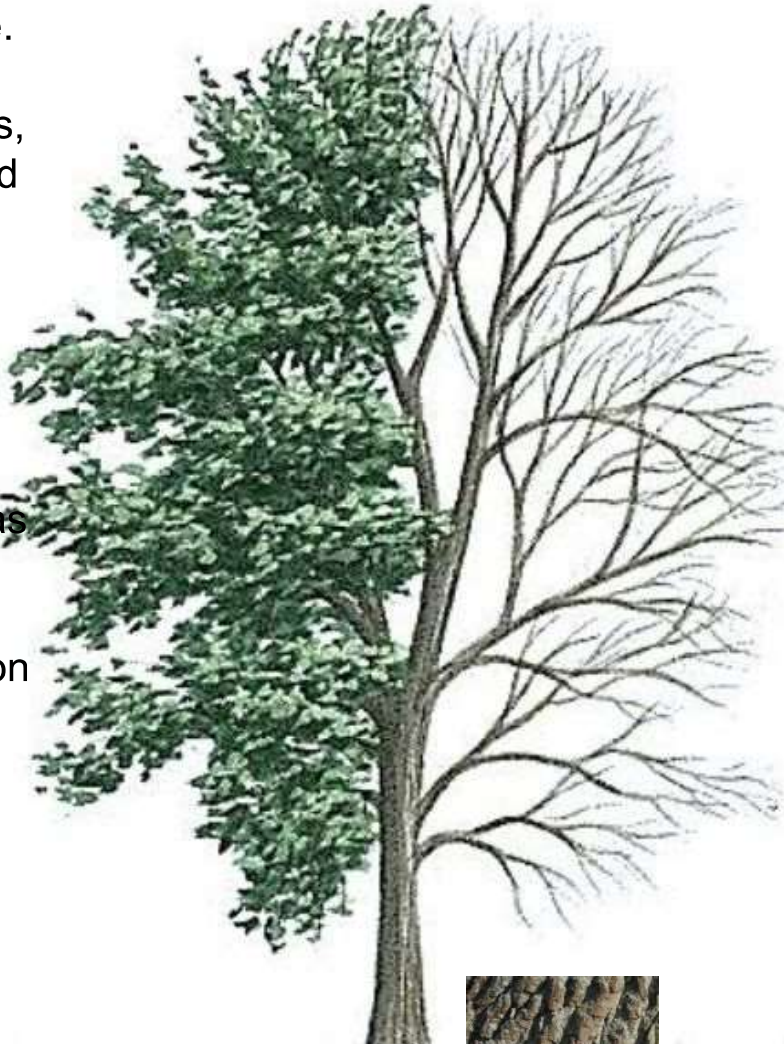
It grows in a wide range of habitats, including wetlands, riverbanks, and upland forests.

It is fast growing, tall, and straight but wood is lightweight and very soft.

It provides habitat for birds, such as warblers and finches that feed on its seeds, while mammals like beavers and moose may browse on its leaves and bark.

Bees sometimes harvest the resin from Balsam Poplar and use it to disinfect their hives.

The scent of the buds is similar to that of vanilla.



Balsam Poplar has cultural significance in indigenous traditions and folklore and is revered for its medicinal properties, fragrance, and role in supporting wildlife.

The resin from the buds is used for cough medicine and antiseptic ointment for skin wounds

*Balsam Poplar is a native keystone species*





# Black Ash

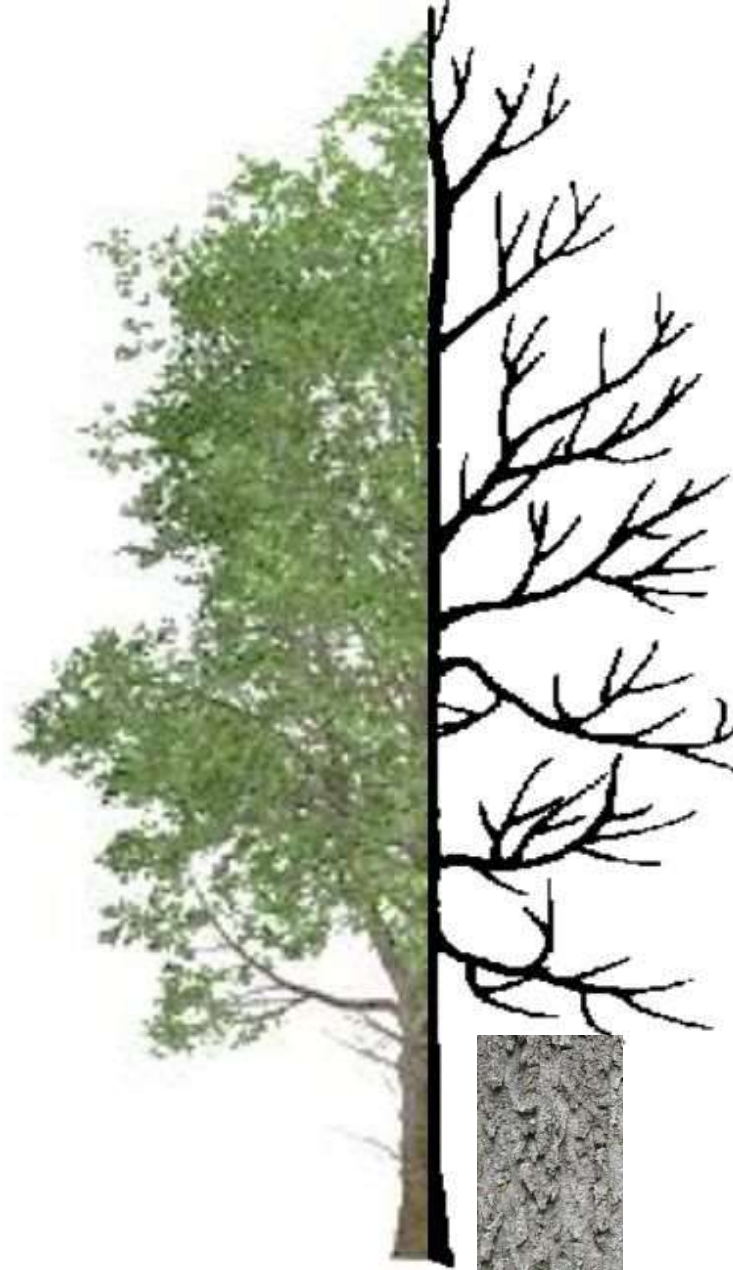
Black Ash is a deciduous tree that prefers wetland habitats such as swamps, marshes, and stream banks.

In the autumn, Black Ash leaves turn yellow to golden-orange.

Black Ash trees are susceptible to the Emerald Ash Borer *Agrilus planipennis*, an invasive beetle species that has devastated ash populations.

Consequently, this tree has almost disappeared from the landscape and conservation efforts are needed to prevent its extinction.

wiisgaak



*Fraxinus nigra*

Frêne noir



Indigenous Peoples have historically used Black Ash for basket weaving, a craft that holds cultural and artistic significance.

The creation of Black Ash baskets involves a meticulous process of pounding and splitting the wood into thin strips.

*Black Ash is an endangered native keystone species.*



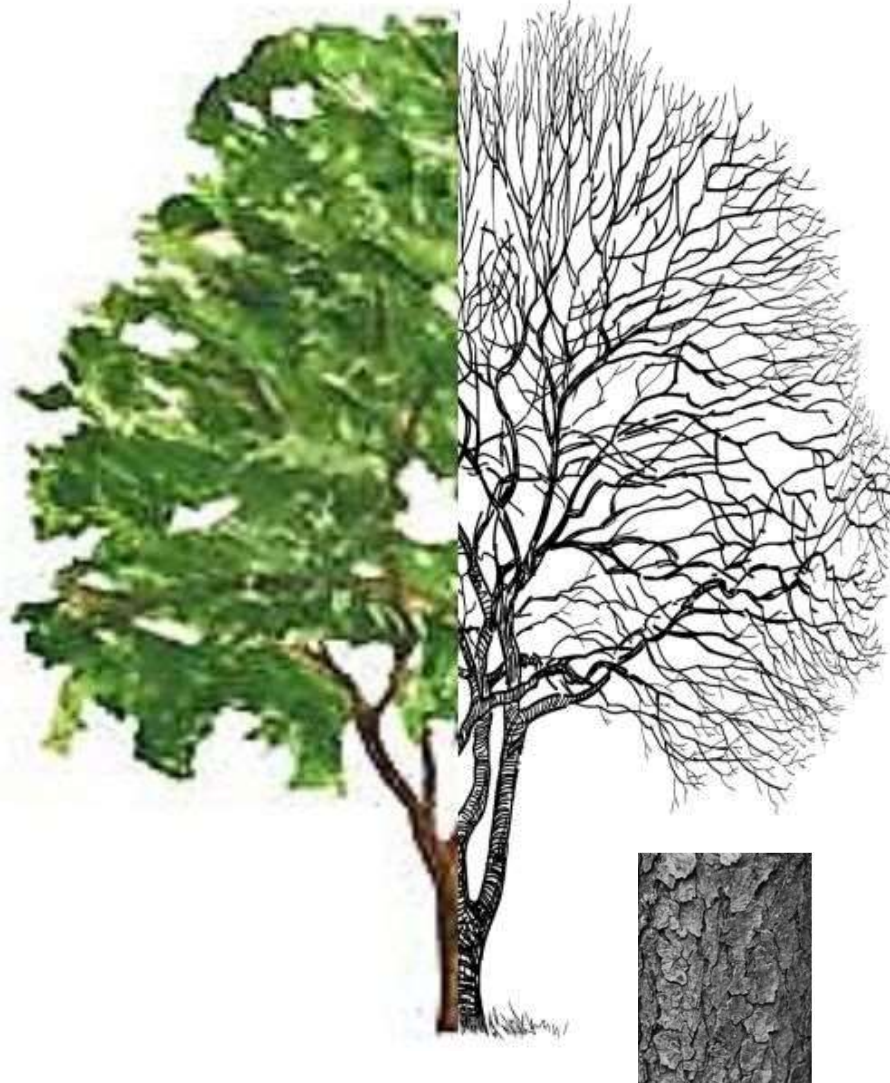
# Black Cherry



Black Cherry is a deciduous tree famous for its blossoms and is the largest of the North American Cherry species.

The leaves smell like almonds when crushed.

ookweninan



Cerisier tardif

Black Cherry wood is easily worked and was once very popular for furniture but it is now more scarce owing to its popularity.

Its fruit is avidly consumed by birds who spread the fruit widely.

Indigenous Peoples use the inner bark to prepare traditional medicines, teas, tonics, or poultices to address health issues such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and muscle pain.

Antioxidants in the bark have been used to treat diabetes.

*Black Cherry is a native keystone species*

*Prunus serotina*





# Black Walnut

bagaanaak

Noyer noir

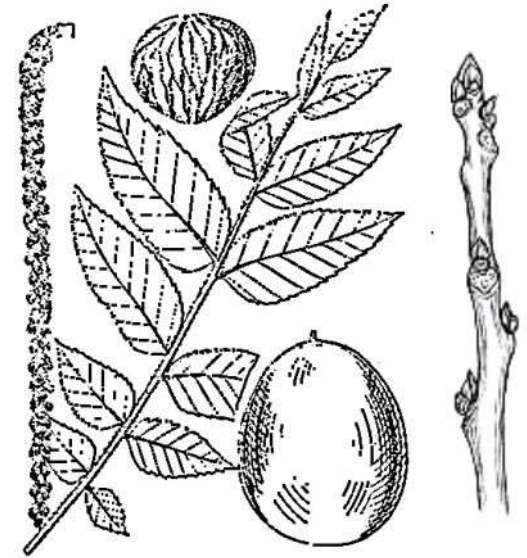
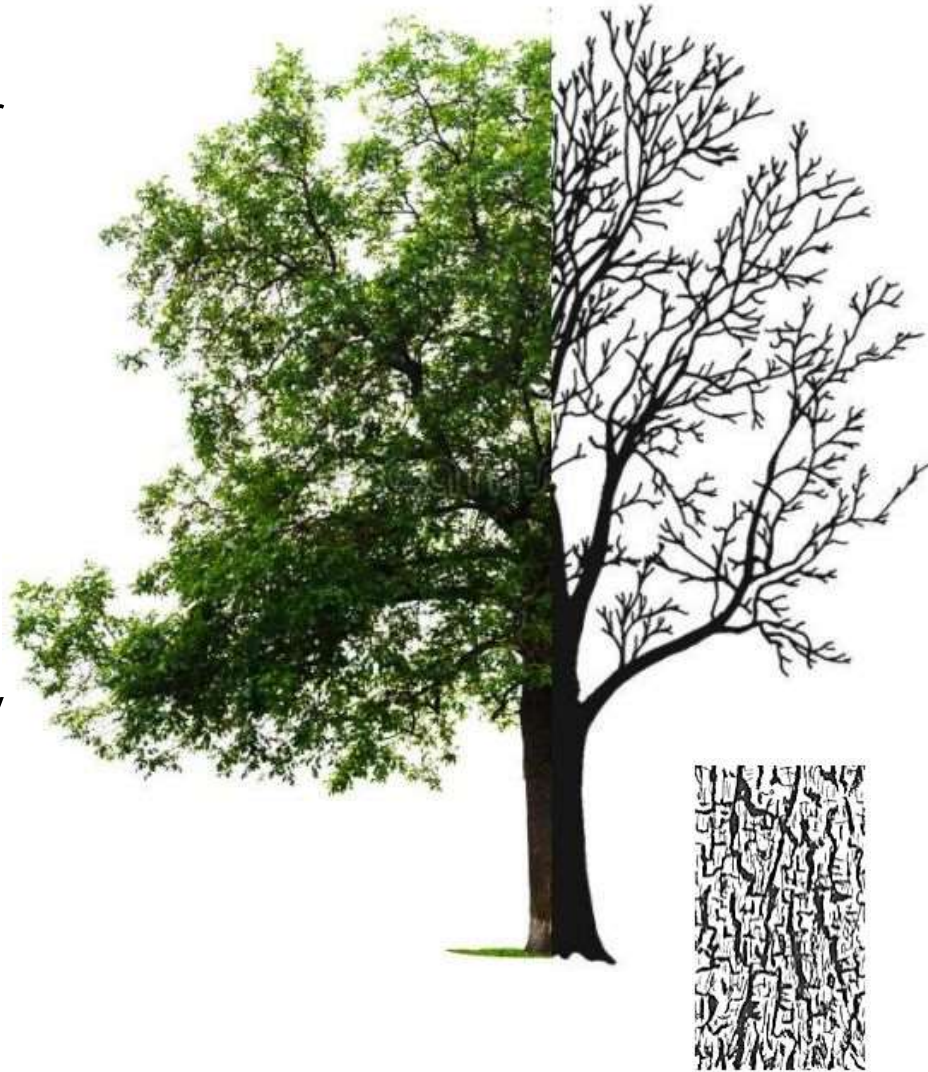
Black Walnut is a highly-prized hardwood used in cabinet-making for its colour and grain.

It is also valued for nuts, timber, and as an ornamental tree.

Indigenous Peoples incorporate walnuts into traditional recipes as a staple food source.

Walnuts are rich in healthy fats, protein, and essential nutrients.

*Black Walnut is a native keystone species.*

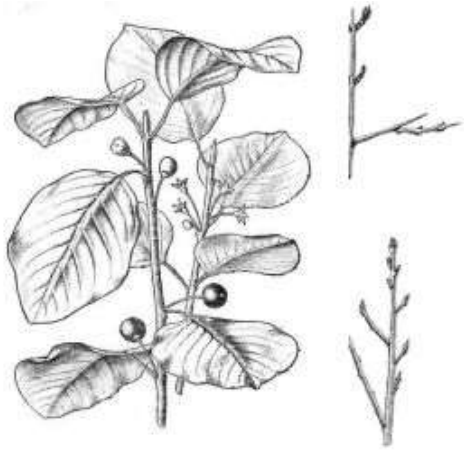


Walnut trees release a chemical toxin (juglone) as a natural defence against competition, preventing some plants from growing beneath the tree.

*Juglans nigra*



# Buckthorn

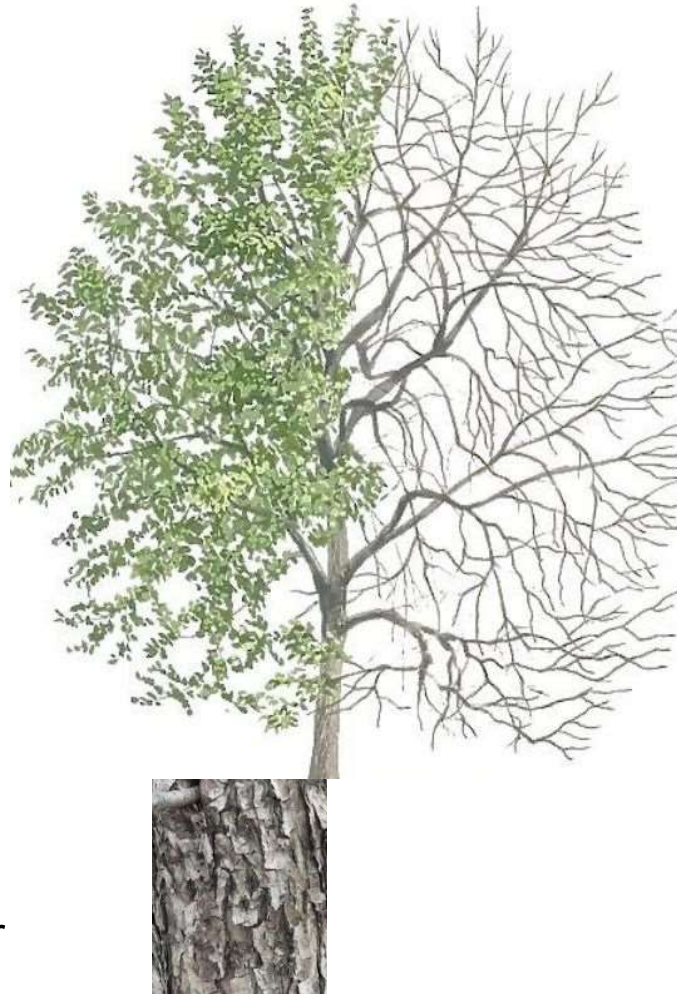


Common Buckthorn is one of the most problematic invasive plant species in North America.

It thrives in a variety of habitats, and light levels helping it outcompete native vegetation with significant negative impacts on native ecosystems.

It reduces biodiversity, alters soil chemistry, and disrupts habitat for wildlife species.

# mtigoonski Nerprun cathartique



Common Buckthorn produces compounds that inhibit the growth of nearby plants.

This contributes to its ability to form dense monocultures in invaded areas as seen in this area of the trail.

It produces enormous numbers of small, round berries that ripen from green to black in the fall.

While these berries are eaten by birds, they are not as nutritious as native berries and can disrupt bird migration patterns.

Control methods include mechanical removal, prescribed burning and preventing seed spread.

*Common Buckthorn is an alien invasive Species*

## *Rhamnus cathartica*

Learn more about this tree





# Butternut mtigwaabaakook Noyer blanc de l'est

Butternut, also known as White Walnut, is a native deciduous tree.

The nuts are nutrient-dense, containing high levels of protein, healthy fats, and essential minerals such as magnesium and potassium.

Indigenous Peoples have used Butternut as an important food source. They also use the bark to make poultices for treating wounds and skin ailments.

These trees provide valuable habitat and food for birds, squirrels, and other small mammals that feed on the nuts, while the leaves and twigs are browsed by deer and other herbivores.



Butternut husks contain tannin that has been used for dyeing fabric and making ink. It will also stain your hands for weeks!

Butternut trees are unfortunately under threat from a disease called Butternut Canker, caused by a fungus.

This disease has devastated populations of Butternut and may now be killing the tree before you.

*Butternut is a native species.*

*Juglans cinerea*



# Bur Oak

# bgaakmish Chêne à gros fruits

Bur Oak is a deciduous tree and one of the largest oak species reaching heights of 30 metres.

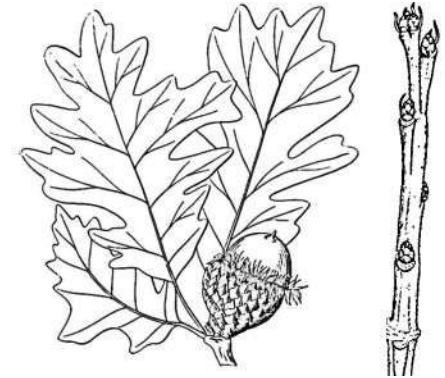
It can live for centuries under favourable conditions.

Although wet tolerant, due to its tap root, Bur Oak is also drought-tolerant making it well-suited to dry, upland habitats.

It has a broad, spreading crown and eventually a massive, gnarled appearance.

The acorns are among the largest of all oak species, measuring up to 4 cm in length.

These acorns are an important food source for wildlife such as deer, squirrels, and birds.



Its dense foliage and sturdy branches offer shelter and nesting sites for birds and mammals.

Its thick bark helps withstand forest fires.

Indigenous peoples use its wood for various purposes, including construction, toolmaking, and fuel. It also holds importance in folklore and traditional medicine.

*Bur Oak is a Native Keystone species.*

## Quercus macrocarpa

Learn more about this tree





# Eastern Cottonwood wiigbaatik

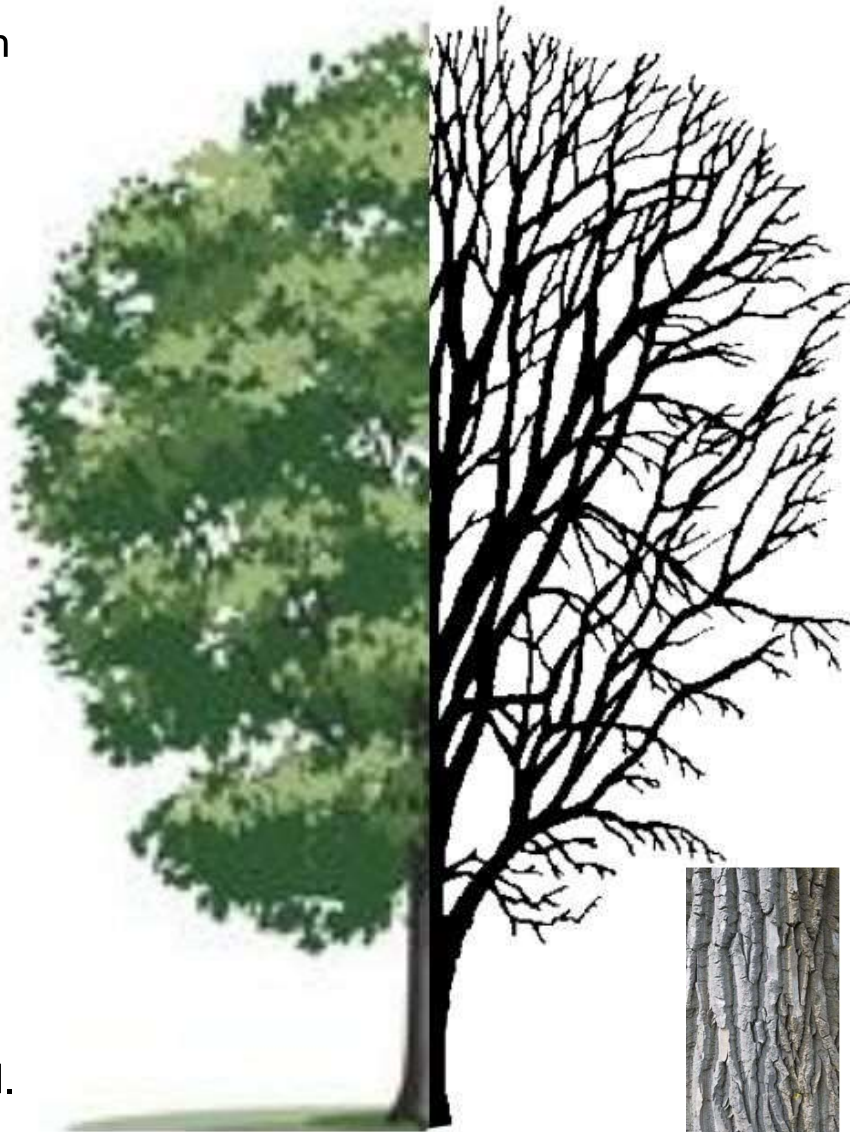
# Peuplier deltoïde

This Eastern Cottonwood is the rarest and tallest tree on the trail with a trunk diameter over 1 meter and an estimated age over 80 years.

It has cotton-like seeds that give this tree its name and can produce over 40 million seeds per year. It may live for nearly 300 years.

As a pioneer tree it can establish a stand of very large trees providing food and shelter for many other plants and animals.

The wood is light and soft with value for lumber, veneer, plywood, particleboard and pulpwood.



Indigenous Peoples value the light weight and suitability of the wood for crafting canoes.

*Eastern Cottonwood is a native keystone species.*

## *Populus deltoides*

Learn more about this tree



# Eastern White Cedar *giizhik*

Eastern White Cedar is an evergreen tree of great cultural and spiritual significance for Anishinaabe people. It is the Sacred Tree of Life, a symbol of balance and considered the grandmother tree in origin stories.

The leaves, boughs, smoke, and aromatic cedar oil are used in cultural ceremonies from birth throughout life. Young leaves are used for medicinal purposes.

The inner bark has edible starch that can be used for survival when needed.

Dry cedar wood resists decay and is used extensively for fence posts, shingles, telephone poles and railroad ties.



*Thuja occidentalis*

# *Thuja occidentalis*



Tea made from cedar leaves is rich in Vitamin C. Early settlers learned from First Nations that cedar tea could prevent scurvy in winter.

Indigenous people have used cedar for the ribs of birchbark canoes because it doesn't warp or shrink.

Its plentiful cones contain seeds that are an important food for over-wintering birds.

*Eastern White Cedar is a native species.*

Learn more about this tree





# Ironwood

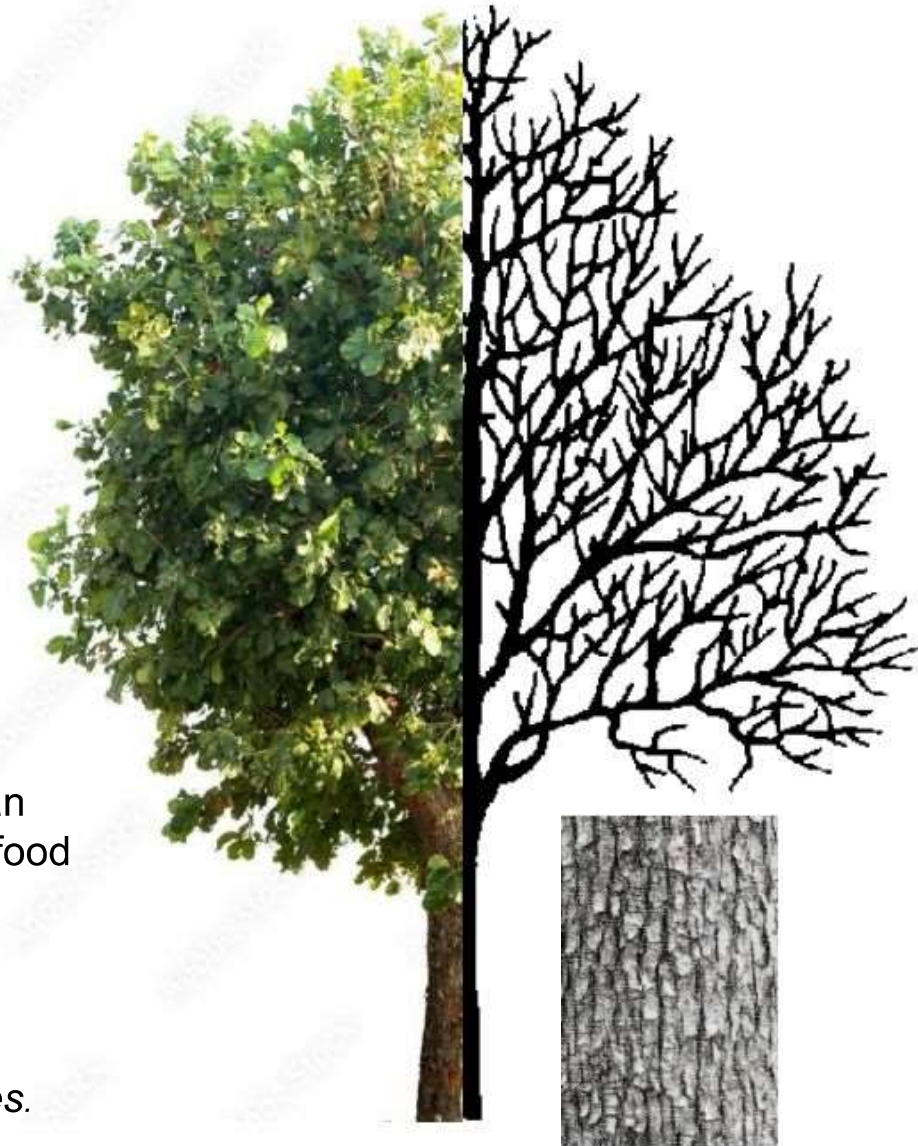
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Ostryer de Virginie



The buds and catkins are an important source of winter food for some birds.

*Ironwood is a native species.*



The common name, Ironwood, comes from its very hard, strong, heavy wood, which is valued for making fence posts and tool handles.

Also named Hop-hornbeam because the pale yellow sacs that contain seeds resemble hops.

Indigenous Peoples have used Ironwood for crafting sharp-edged tools for tasks such as woodworking, carving, and hunting.

*Ostrya virginiana*



# Manitoba Maple zhiishigmewanzh Érable à Giguere

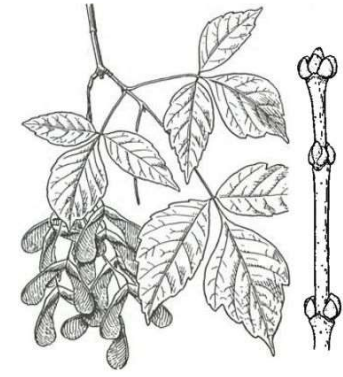
Manitoba Maple (or Box Elder), is often found in wetlands, adjacent to rivers, or in disturbed sites as a pioneer species.

It is known for its rapid growth but produces weak, spreading branches that easily break in wet snow or wind.

Manitoba Maple can become weedy, and forms dense stands in certain areas.

It may outcompete native vegetation and reduce biodiversity if not managed properly.

It is native to Central Canada but is considered an alien invasive tree in Eastern Ontario.



Birds and small mammals eat the abundant seeds as an important winter food source.

Foliage is browsed by deer and other herbivores. The tree also offers shelter and nesting sites for birds.

Indigenous peoples historically used Manitoba Maple for medicinal, culinary and ceremonial purposes.

*Manitoba Maple is an invasive species in Eastern Ontario.*

## *Acer negundo*





# Red Pine

# baakawanagemag

# Pin rouge

Red Pine is a native coniferous tree.

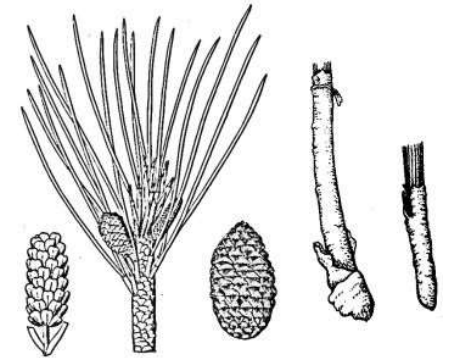
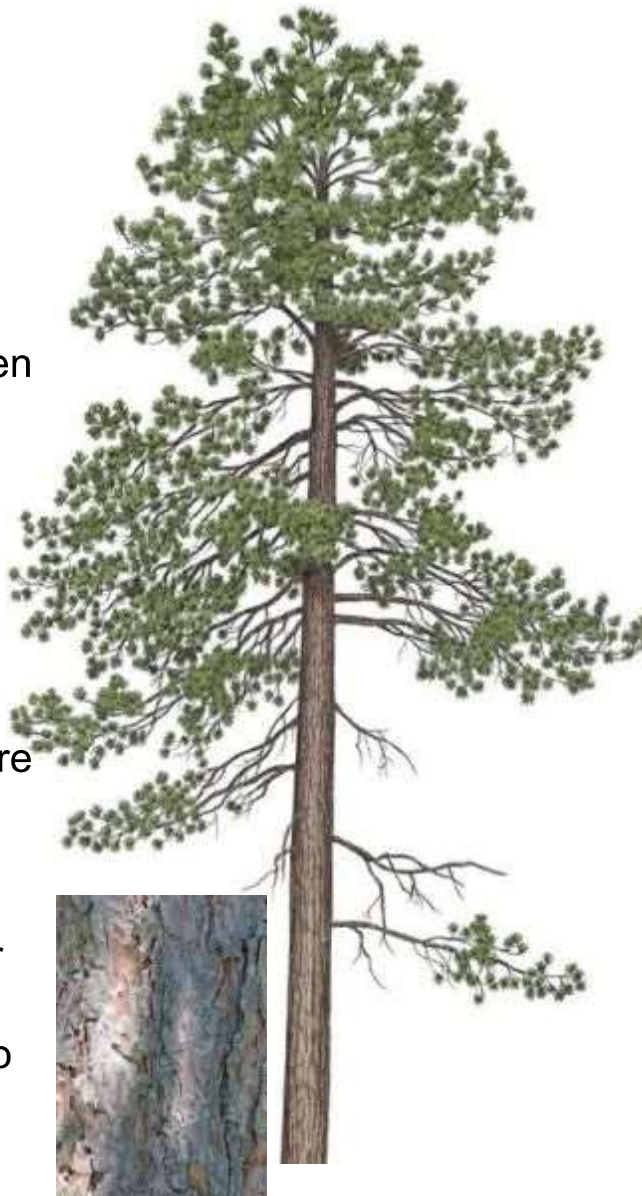
Its bark is reddish-brown and furrowed, providing a distinctive appearance.

The needles are long, arranged in bundles of two, and have a dark green colour.

It grows in a variety of habitats, including sandy soils and rocky outcrops.

It produces oval-shaped cones that remain closed for several years before opening to release seeds to be dispersed by wind.

Red pine can live for centuries under favourable conditions. Some individuals have been documented to be more than 500 years old.



Red Pine can survive and even benefit from wildfires. Its thick bark provides protection from heat, and its cones require the intense heat of a fire to open and release seeds.

It plays a significant ecological role in forest ecosystems helping stabilise soils, regulate water flow, and provide habitat for diverse plant and animal species.

*Red pine is a native keystone species.*

***Pinus resinosa***



# Rock Elm

Rock Elm is an ancient species, dating back to the Ice Age.

It has a long lifespan of several hundred years under favourable conditions.

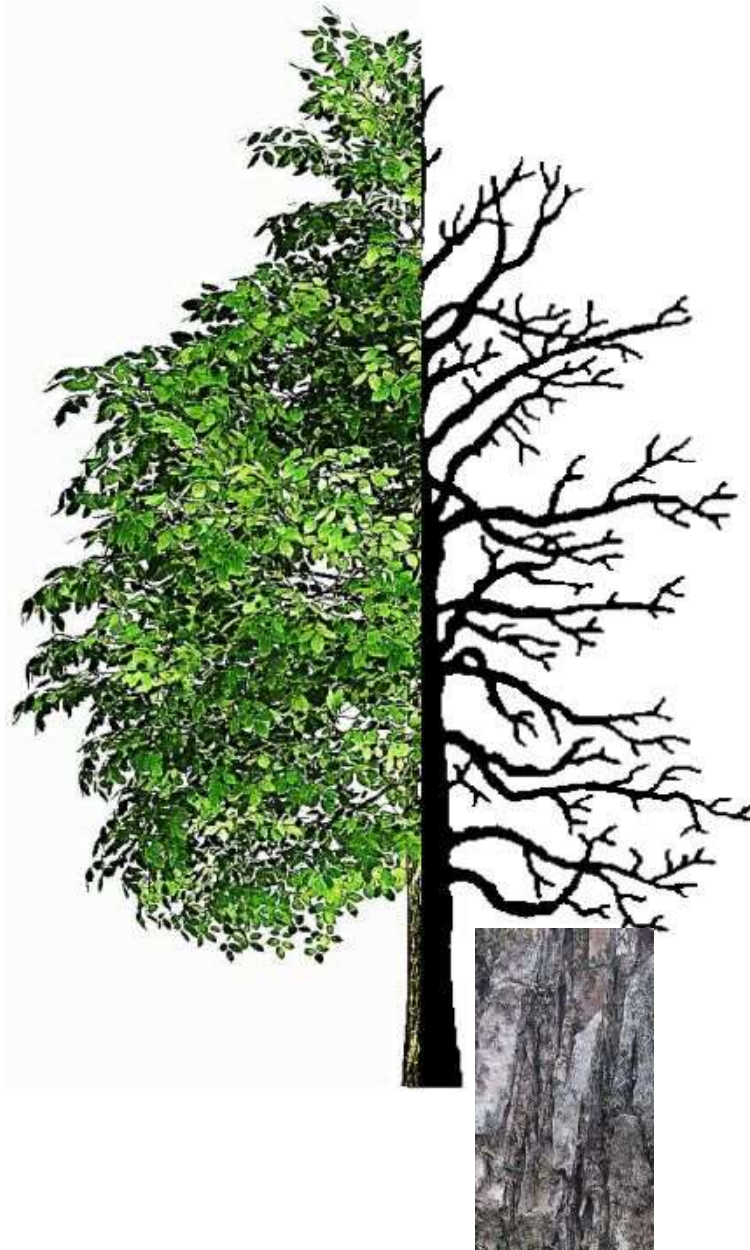
True to its name, it has remarkably dense and durable wood renowned for its strength and resistance to decay, making it popular for woodworking applications.

The bark is characterised by deep furrows and ridges, giving the tree a rugged and distinctive appearance as well as habitats for insects.

Woodpeckers and nuthatches often forage on its bark for insects, while deer browse its foliage.



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*Ulmus thomasi*

Orme liège



Rock Elm plays a crucial role in stabilising soil, preventing erosion, and supporting habitats for biodiversity.

Due to its toughness and versatility, Rock Elm was extensively used by Indigenous Peoples for making tool handles.

*Rock Elm is a native keystone species.*

Learn more about this tree





# Scots Pine



Scots Pine is an invasive coniferous tree, native to Western Europe across to Eastern Siberia.

It is a long-lived tree capable of surviving for centuries. Some individuals have been found to be over 700 years old.

Its bark is reddish-brown and becomes deeply furrowed with age, providing insulation against cold temperatures and protection from wildfires.

# gaabgevak



# *Pinus sylvestris*

# Pin sylvestre

Scots Pine has irregular trunks and relatively poor quality wood.

The needles are shorter than Red Pine needles, in bundles of two, and bluish-green in colour,

It produces oval-shaped cones that mature in their second year and release seeds to the wind.

It grows fast and retains its needles, hence it is popular as a Christmas tree.

Its resin has been historically used in varnishes, adhesives, and medicinal products.

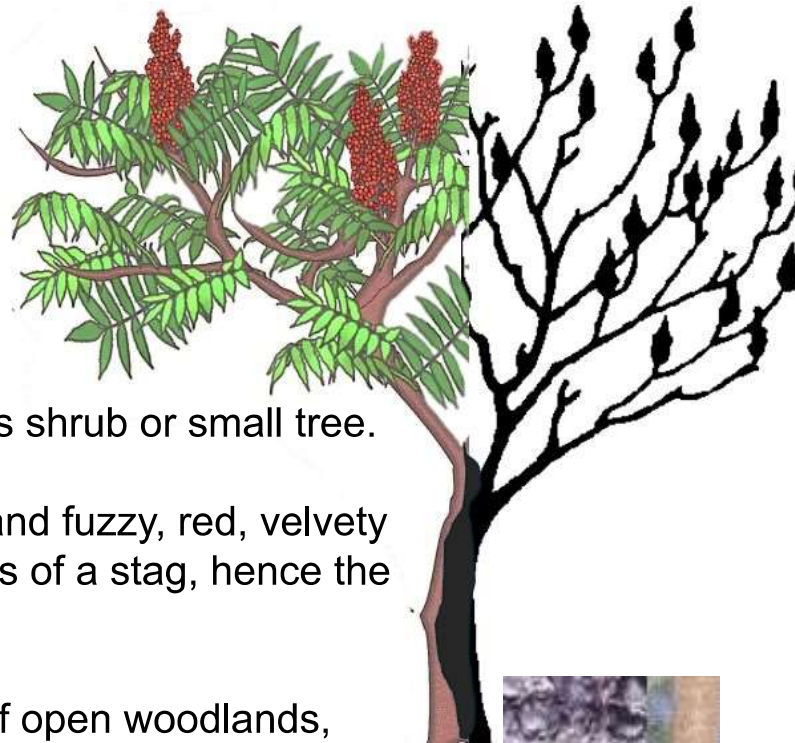
*Scots Pine is an alien invasive species.*



# Staghorn Sumac

paakwan

Sumac vinaigrier



Staghorn Sumac is a deciduous shrub or small tree.

It has large compound leaves and fuzzy, red, velvety branches resembling the antlers of a stag, hence the name "Staghorn."

It is often found on the edges of open woodlands, fields, and along roadsides.

The leaves turn vibrant shades of orange, red, and purple in the fall.

The red, fuzzy fruits persist through the winter months and are a food source for wildlife such as birds and small mammals.

Indigenous Peoples use various parts of Staghorn Sumac for medicinal, culinary, and practical purposes.

The fruit is used to make a tangy spice and beverage, and the bark and leaves are rich in tannin and used to tan hides for leather-making.

The stems were used traditionally to make spigots for tapping Sugar Maple sap for syrup.

Staghorn Sumac produces compounds that inhibit the growth of competing plants nearby.

*Staghorn Sumac is a pioneer native species.*

*Rhus typhina*





# Sugar Maple

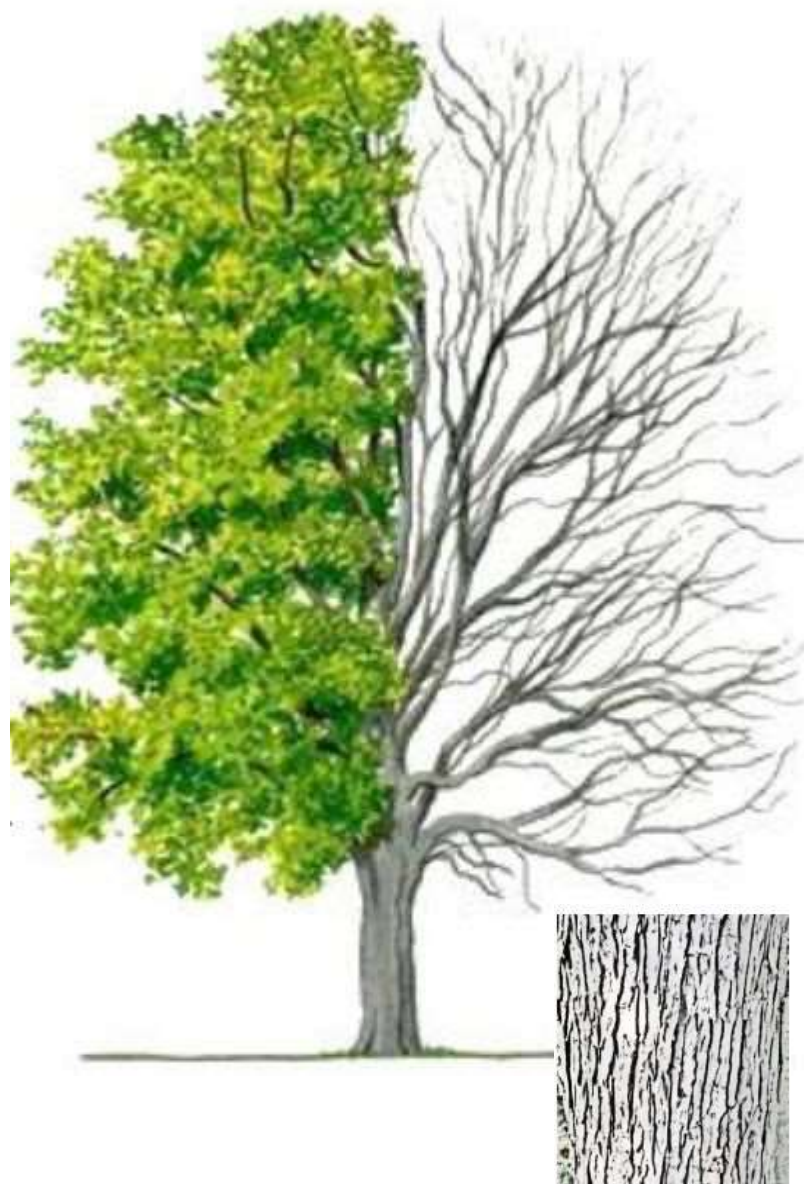
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# Érable à sucre



Maple trees are an iconic symbol of Canada.

The five lobed maple leaf appeared on the Canadian flag in 1965, symbolizing the country's natural beauty and cultural heritage.



For millennia, First Nations tapped and condensed maple sap from Sugar Maples to make maple syrup and used bark extracts as a cough remedy.

Canada produces over 70% of the world's supply of maple syrup.

Maple wood is highly valued for flooring, furniture and a range of other uses.

*The Sugar Maple is a native keystone species.*



## Acer saccharum

Learn more about this tree



# Trembling Aspen

mikzaat Peuplier faux-tremble

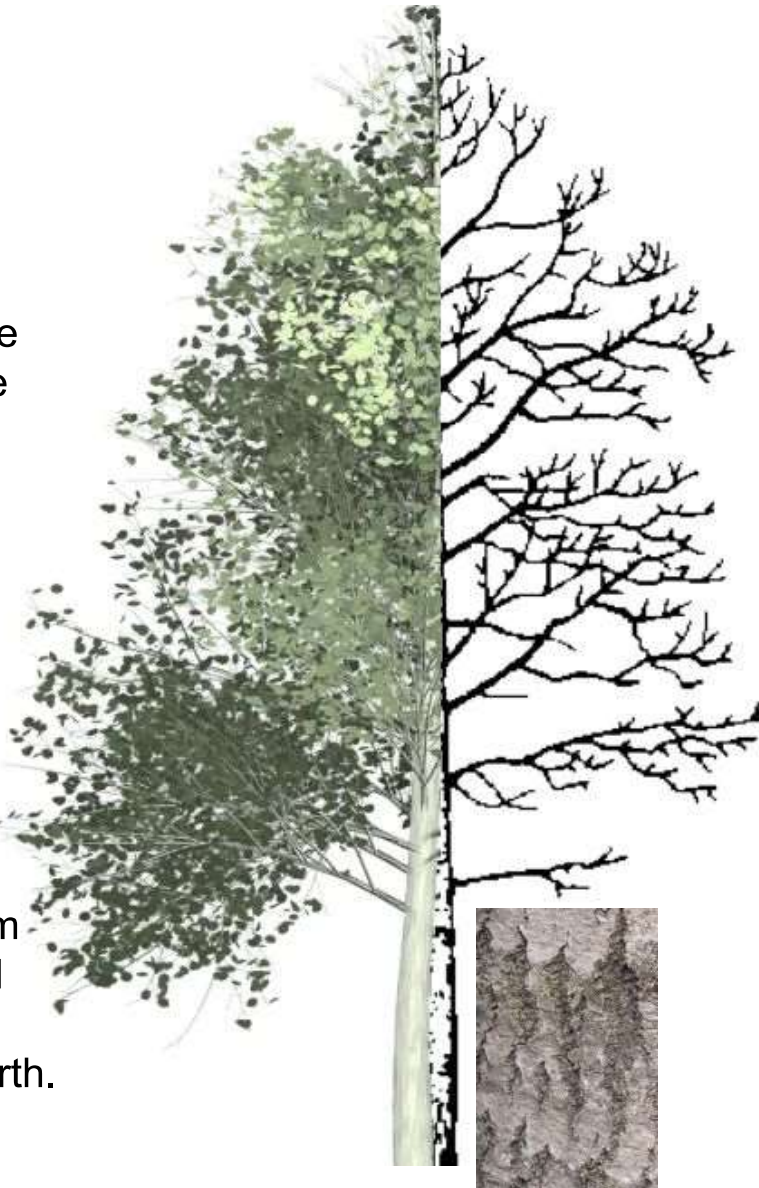
Trembling Aspen is a widely distributed deciduous tree species.

It is known for its distinctive trembling leaves because the leaves' flattened petioles cause them to flutter or tremble in the slightest breeze.

It reproduces through forming clonal colonies of genetically identical trees connected by a single root system.

This stand of Trembling Aspen before you is in fact one tree.

Some "colonies" may date from just after the last glacial period making them the oldest and largest living organisms on Earth.



Trembling Aspen is adapted to thrive in fire-prone ecosystems regenerating quickly after wildfires through sprouting from its roots.

Leaves turn vibrant shades of yellow, gold, and orange, creating stunning displays of fall colour.

Indigenous Peoples use trembling aspen bark for making baskets, ropes, and traditional medicines, while the wood is used for construction and tools.

*Trembling Aspen is a native keystone species.*





# White Ash

aaginaak

Frêne blanc

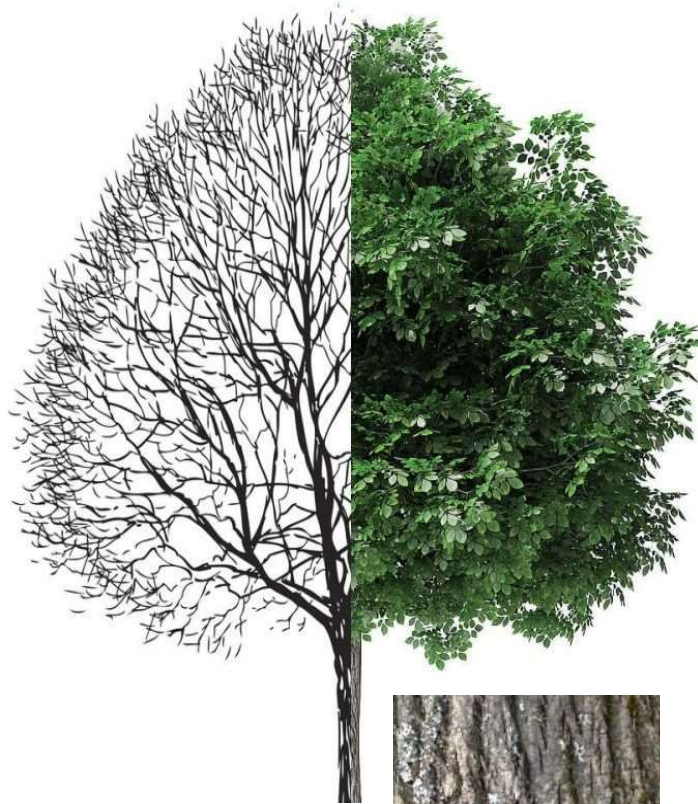
White Ash is a deciduous tree that prefers moist well drained soils.

These trees are either male or female. Male trees produce pollen, while female trees produce seed-bearing samaras which are dispersed by the wind.

In the autumn, White Ash leaves turn yellow to bronze-purple.

White Ash trees are susceptible to the Emerald Ash Borer *Agilus planipennis*, an invasive beetle species that has devastated ash populations.

Consequently, this tree has almost disappeared from the landscape and conservation efforts are needed to prevent its extinction.



Indigenous Peoples have historically used White Ash for making baskets, snowshoes, and canoe frames.

The wood of the White Ash is strong, dense, elastic, and shock-resistant, making it highly valued for making baseball bats, tool handles, and other wood products.

*White Ash is an endangered native keystone species.*

***Fraxinus americana***



# Habitat Placards



# Habitats:

## Standing dead trees are full of life



**Work of a Pileated  
Woodpecker**

**Standing dead trees** (Snags) are biodiversity hotspots. They are critical habitats for specialised species that include animals, plants, and fungi, within a relatively small area.

**Nesting Sites:** Many wildlife species such as woodpeckers, owls, and the Northern Flying Squirrel rely on standing dead trees for nesting.

**Insect Diversity:** Standing dead trees are home to an abundance of insects that play crucial roles in nutrient recycling, decomposition and healthy ecosystems.

**Wildlife Food Sources:** Insects attracted to decaying wood in turn become prey for birds, bats, tree frogs, and other insectivores, creating a dynamic food web centred around these “dead” trees.

**Carbon Sequestration:** While dead, standing trees continue to hold carbon, playing a role in addressing climate change.

**Natural Regeneration:** Dead trees contribute to forest regeneration by creating gaps in the canopy allowing sunlight to reach the forest floor, thus contributing to forest succession and biodiversity.

Learn more about Snags



# Lily of the Valley *giigoonyens*

Lily of the Valley is a highly fragrant woodland plant native to Europe and Asia.

It is an invasive plant in Ontario and spreads by both seeds and rhizomes.

It forms large colonies which out-compete native species for moisture, sunlight, nutrients and space.

In many cultures, it is associated with the arrival of spring and is used in May Day celebrations.

The leaves and flowers of Lily of the Valley are toxic and should not be ingested.



*Convallaria majalis*

# Muguet

The flower is the birth flower for May and is also the official flower of Finland.

In folklore, it is believed to have magical powers, including the ability to attract fairies.

It has been used in traditional medicine to treat various ailments, including heart conditions, headaches, and epilepsy.

The scent of Lily of the Valley has been used in perfumes and other fragrances for centuries and is prized for its sweet and floral aroma.





# Poison Ivy

# gizekwandagoons

# Herbe à puce

Poison-ivy naturally occurs across much of North America.

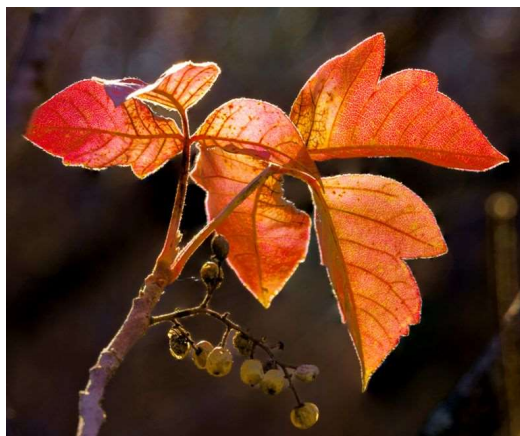
In Ontario, it is found in forests, along trails, and in disturbed areas like roadsides and fields.

## **"Leaflets three, let it be":**

Poison-ivy has a compound leaf which clusters three pointed leaflets. The middle one is longer and more pointed than the other two.

In spring and summer leaves are bright green. In fall, the leaves turn yellow, orange, or red. Poison-ivy also produces white or yellowish berries.

Many animals, including birds and small mammals, use poison-ivy for shelter. Its dense growth provides cover and protection.



Poison-ivy contains an oil compound called urushiol which can cause an itchy and painful rash on the skin. About 85% of people are allergic to urushiol.

Urushiol can stick to pets' fur and be transferred to humans. If pets roam in areas with poison-ivy, bathe them carefully. Wear gloves to avoid getting the oil on your skin.

Never burn poison-ivy, as the urushiol oil can be carried in the smoke and cause serious lung irritation or a rash if inhaled.

Mammals such as chipmunks and deer eat its leaves. Its seeds and berries are an important snack for songbirds in the late fall and early winter.

