



Fagus grandifolia

American beech

Family *Fagaceae*

Origin Native

WIS Code FACU CoC 6

DESCRIPTION

Tree to 35 m tall, often with a large spreading crown. Bark and branches are smooth, light gray with brown smooth twigs and distinct cigar-shaped (19 mm long) narrow, pointed winter buds. Leaves (5 to 15 cm long) are alternate, oval-elliptic, with toothed margins. The leaves turn yellow to tan in the fall, and can be persistent, especially on younger trees and lower branches of large trees.



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FLOWERS AND FRUITS

April; September-October. Male and female flowers, on the same tree, develop as leaves emerge. Male flowers are in rounded drooping clusters, and female flowers are in pairs on a stout stalk with protective bracts. Fruits have husks with prickly burs, enclosing two triangular-shaped smooth brown nuts.

HABITAT

Moist forests, well-drained floodplain terraces, ravines and lower slopes.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Ulmus americana, American elm, has leaf bases and mid-rib that are offset (asymmetrical), the bark is rough (not smooth), winter buds are small, rounded (not long, pointed) and fruits are winged samaras (not nuts).

Castanea dentata, American chestnut, has longer leaves (10 to 30 cm) with deeply toothed margins, male flowers are clustered in long spikes (not round clusters), and fruits, also in spiny husks, are much larger nuts.



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Ulmus americana



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Castanea dentata