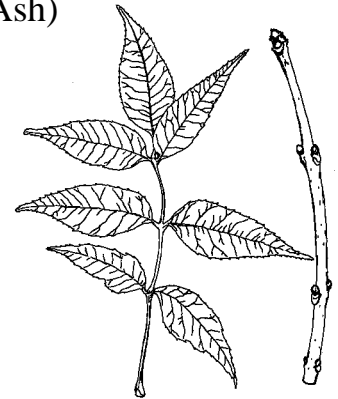


# Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

**Common Name:** Green Ash (Red Ash, Swamp Ash, Water Ash)

**Botanical Name:** *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*



**Tree Type:** Deciduous

## **Physical Description:**

**Growth Habit:** Green ash is a fast growing tree and is the most adaptable and widely distributed of all the American ashes. It grows near the banks of streams and lakes on rich moist soil. The leaves are opposite and pinnately compound. They are 12 inches long, with 5 to 9 ovate, taper-pointed, sharply toothed or sometimes smooth, glossy green leaflets, which turn yellow in the fall. The bark on the trunk of old trees is firm and furrowed like that of white ash and is dark gray or brown in color. The inner bark is cinnamon red in color. The new twigs are greenish gray and most often covered with numerous hairs.

**Height:** Green ash reaches a height of 50-60 feet with a trunk diameter of 16-20 inches. It is hardy to Zone 3.

**Shape:** Green ash is softly pyramidal when young and develops an upright-spreading habit at maturity with 3 to 5 main branches and many coarse, twiggy branchlets which bend down and then up at the ends. The crown is extremely irregular.

## **Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:**

The flowers are dioecious, small, green or purple with no petals. They are borne in clusters in the spring, with or just before the leaves. The fruit is a 2-inch long samara. It starts out green, then turns to brown, and hangs in clusters.

## **Range within Maine:**

Green ash occurs statewide except in Piscataquis, Franklin and Hancock Counties. It is sometimes mistaken for black ash.

## **Distinguishing Features:**

The leaf scars are straight across the top.

## **Interesting Features:**

The wood is hard, heavy, strong, coarse grained, easy to bend and brittle. It is used to make tool handles and baseball bats (although it is not as desirable as white ash), rough lumber and pulp.

The Europeans pickled young ash fruits. Native Americans used ash cambium as food, medicine (cambium, bark extracts and leaves) and the wood for snowshoe frames, canoes and furniture.

## **Relationship to Wildlife:**

A number of animals and birds eat the seeds. Young trees are subject to damage from deer browsing, and rabbits have been known to sever the stems.

## **Landscape Use:**

Green ash is popular as a shade tree in residential areas because of its adaptability to a wide range of sites and its good form. It is widely planted along streets, commercial areas, lawns, parks and golf courses. Because of its popularity, it has been over planted.

## **Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:**

Borers and oystershell scale are a significant problem for this species. Other pests include the carpenterworm, brownheaded ash sawfly, and the blackheaded ash sawfly. Diseases affecting green ash include anthracnose, rust and root rot.

## **References:**

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