



Life History:

The American Hophornbeam's Latin name is *Ostrya Virginiana* and is in the Betulaceae family. The Ironwood is another common name for the American Hophornbeam Tree. Its typical lifespan is 100 years, and its maximum lifespan is 150 years. The American Hophornbeam is very tolerant to and enjoys the shade. However, its ideal condition would be partly sunny. Also, it is best for the tree to be in moist soil, and the tree prefers a neutral temperature. The main pollination agent for this tree is wind.

Tree Size:

This is a small, slow growing tree. The typical height of the American Hophornbeam is 30-50 feet tall. The tree trunk's diameter is usually 1 foot or less.

Geographic Range:

The American Hophornbeam can be found all over Ohio. This tree is found over majority of the eastern half of the United States. You can find it from almost anywhere between Maine and Texas. Specifically Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Florida.

Economic Importance:

The wood of the *Ostrya Virginiana* is used for a variety of things. Since the wood from this tree is very strong and sturdy it is commonly used for posts, handles, golf clubs, and mallets. However, because the tree is relatively small, the wood is not collected to make timber.

Interesting Facts:

Another common name for the American Hophornbeam is the Ironwood because how strong, sturdy, and hard the wood is. The American Hophornbeam will sprout from its stump after a severe fire has damaged it. The buds and catkins of this tree serve as important food for the winter for animals such as rabbits and deer.

American Hophornbeam (*Ostrya Virginiana*)

By: Brynne Kelly



Insects and Fungal Pests:

There usually not any diseases on this tree that are very serious. The American Hophornbeam can attain leaf blisters that deform leaves. However, this is not a serious problem and does not need to be controlled. The tree also may get leaf spots. This is also not a very serious issue, and an owner of an American Hophornbeam tree should not worry about these diseases. With that being said, pests never usually cause any serious damage to this tree either. As long as the tree is in a comfortable environment, it shouldn't have any problems with diseases and pests.



Characteristics:

Leaf Characteristics:

The *Ostrya Virginiana* leaves are typically 2 ½ to 5 inches long and 1 ½ to 2 inches wide. The leaves are arranged on the tree alternately, and they are simple. The leaves are ovate shaped and the basal part to the leaves are rounded or somewhat heart shaped and asymmetrical. The edges of the leaves are sharply doubly toothed and serrated. The top of the leaves are green, while the bottom of the leaves are a yellowish-green color and hairy. In the fall the leaves turn a yellow or orange, and they fall in early autumn. It is common for this tree to hold some of the dead leaves on its branches through the winter months.

Stem Characteristics:

The twigs of the *Ostrya Virginiana* are slender and tough. They are a dull yellowish-brown color and can be slightly hairy. The buds on the twigs are all lateral and around ¼ inch in length.



Characteristics:

Flower characteristics:

Both male and female flowers can be found on the same tree, but they are found in separate clusters. The flower color is green in the summer. The male catkins are usually grouped in three, and are 2 to 3 inches long when fully developed.

Fruit Characteristics: The American Hophornbeam fruits are small and flattened. The fruit is a brownish nutlet and is about ¾ an inch long. This fruit resembles the fruit of the common hop, hence the name of the American Hophornbeam. The fruits finish developing during the summer and are usually ripe by the end of August. After ripening, the seeds start to disperse through the fall and winter months via wind. Most American Hophornbeams become fruitful around the age of 25.

