

White Ash

(*Fraxinus americana*)

The genus *Fraxinus* includes all the Ash trees, and taken as a whole (over 20 recognized Ash species in the US) Ash trees can be found in every US state except Alaska. Ash trees are large, 60 to 80 feet tall. They are commonly found in forests along with Elms and Maples, and increased considerably when Elm tree populations were decimated by Dutch Elm Disease. White Ash is a valuable timber source; its wood is used in furniture, tools and for the Louisville Slugger baseball bats!

Ash trees flower in mid-spring. In northern climates, flowering usually begins after 5 days of temperatures remaining above freezing. The flowers are very inconspicuous (see picture above right), and flowering occurs well before leafing begins. Ash trees are among the latest trees to leaf out. Female flowers give way to drooping clusters of winged seed pods, called samaras, that measure about 2 inches in length. These seed pods may remain on the tree throughout winter.

Ash pollen is considered an important, severe allergen. It can cause allergic rhinitis and asthma symptoms. There is extensive cross-reactivity between different Ash trees, as well as some cross-reactivity with Olive tree, Privet and Russian Olive trees.

