

# Leaves, Limbs Needles & Boughs



by Fred Opperman

Tree Trivia Question: What tree is used in making wooden matches? Answer at end of article.

*Ulmus americana* — American Elm is this month's selection. The American Elm was the tree of Main Street, America until the dreaded "Dutch Elm Disease" wiped out vast populations of it. It is still seen on many golf courses and city streets, but is not as plentiful as it once was. Consequently "*Ulmus americana*" is not being grown in our nurseries. In its place are new cultivars that are trying to achieve the good points and majestic crowns we used to love.

Leaves: Alternate, simple; blades oval to elliptic, pointed at the tip, strongly asymmetrical at the base. 3 to 6 inches long and 1 to 3 inches wide. Lower surfaces of the leaves are pubescent or hairy.



Bark: Light or dark gray, furrowed, at maturity breaking into thin plates.

Twigs: Brown, slender, smooth or sparsely hairy, often zigzag; leaf scars alternate, half-round, each with 3 bundle traces.



Buds: Broadly ovoid, reddish-brown, smooth or sparsely hairy, up to one-fourth inch long.

Flowers: Perfect, greenish red, in fascicles of 3 or 4, appearing before the leaves unfold.



Fruit: Rounded, notched disc-shaped samara, 1/2" long. Hairy along the edges, each wing notched at the top and surrounding a single central seed.

Wood: Heavy, strong, pale brown.

Uses: Flooring, shipbuilding, & farm implements.

Cultivars: "Liberty" by the Elm Research Institute; "Pioneer" by Nursery Crops Research Laboratory; "Homestead" by Nursery Crops Research. Others are also available in very limited quantities and with very few nurseries growing any.

Trivia answer: Quaking Aspen — *Populus tremuloides*

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