

Leaves, Limbs, Needles and Boughs

by Fred Opperman

I hope everyone took the time to read Tom Green's and Kris Bachtell's fine report and article, "Trees of Chicago Area Golf Courses" in the December 1992 issue of **The Bull Sheet**. It was very interesting to see how the various trees ranked overall. We are overplanting some varieties and need to take steps to correct this situation.

Even though Bur Oak, White Oak and Red Oak are listed as very numerous (between 2000 and 1001 specimens) they are very difficult to grow (exception being the Red Oak) and are not regenerating themselves. Thus the populations are in a decline and need to be replanted at every opportunity.

This month's selection will fall in the report of between 250 and 101 specimens of the list. Hop Hornbeam — *Ostrya virginiana*. Another common name is Ironwood. This is a small tree usually reaching only 35 feet and with trunk diameters of up to only 1 foot. The crown is usually rounded and is somewhat of an understory tree.

Bark: Brown and scaly at maturity.

Leaves: Alternate, simple, elliptic to ovate, pointed at the tip, up to 5 inches long. Double toothed, green and usually smooth on the upper surface, and slightly hairy on the lower surface.



Twigs: Slender, reddish-brown, sometimes hairy, tough to break; leaf scars alternate, crescent-shaped, slightly elevated with 3 bundle scars.



Flowers: Staminate and pistillate born separately but on the same tree. The staminate catkins are on the tree through the winter before opening in late April or May.



Wood: Hard, thus the name "Ironwood".

Habitat: Upland wood, dry and rocky areas.

Availability is so-so, few nurseries grow it for it is slow growing and there is not a great demand for it.



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