

AMERICAN HORNBEAM

Carpinus caroliniana Walt.

American hornbeam or blue-beech occurs west of the Penobscot River in the southern third of the state. The hornbeam is most commonly found in southern and central Maine, inhabiting wet woods and the borders of swamp and streams. It is a small, slow growing tree 10 - 25 feet tall and 4 - 10 inches in diameter. The branches are crooked. The trunk is characteristically ridged, or fluted longitudinally.



The **bark** is smooth, and grayish-blue. The leaves are alternate, egg-shaped or oval, 2 - 3 inches long, sharply toothed, smooth above and hairy below. They turn a brilliant scarlet in the autumn.

The **flowers** are produced in catkins which open in the spring before the leaves.

The **fruit** is a ribbed nutlet which is attached to the base of a three-lobed bract, and is borne in open clusters.

The **twigs** are reddish brown, slender and tough. Buds are reddish brown, slender, and sharp pointed.

The **wood** is close-grained, compact, strong, tough and durable. It is used for levers, handles, and wedges.

