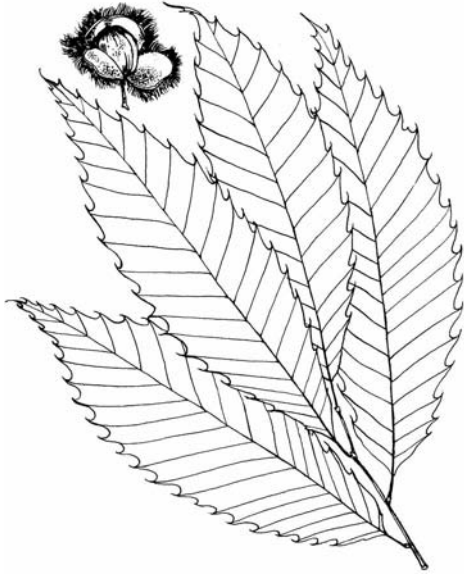


## AMERICAN CHESTNUT

*Castanea dentata* (Marsh.) Borkh.

Most of the chestnut trees in Maine have been destroyed by the chestnut blight fungus, *Endothia parasitica*. There are national efforts underway to develop blight resistant trees of this once very important tree species. The natural range of American chestnut only extended into southern and central portions of the state and now



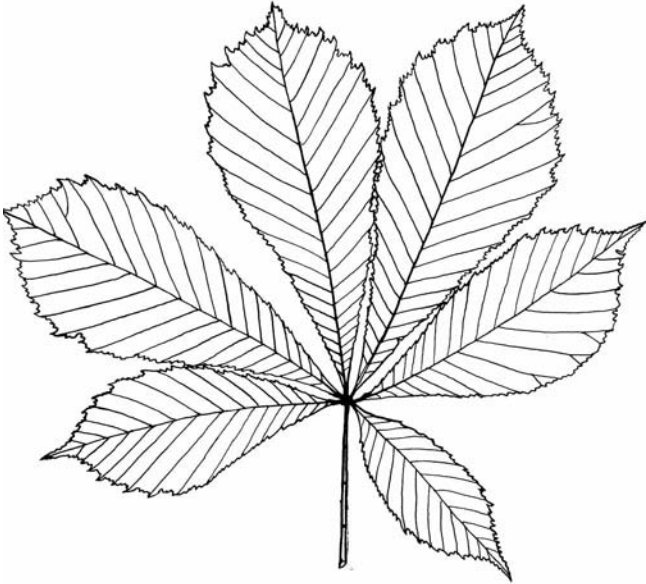
occurs infrequently, usually as sprout growth, in the southern half of the state on rich, well-drained soil. It has been planted occasionally as far north as Bangor. The tree grows rapidly. In the forest, it has a tall, straight trunk free of limbs, and a small head. When not crowded, the trunk divides into three or four limbs and forms a low, broad top. It reaches a height of 60-70 feet and a diameter of 15-30 inches. The **bark** on the trunk of old trees is dark brown and divided into broad, flat ridges by shallow, irregular fissures. On young stems, it is smooth and dark gray with a green tinge. The **leaves** are coarsely toothed and hooked, with the leaf margin between the teeth rounded. Leaves are alternate, 5-8 inches long, yellow-green, and smooth on both surfaces. The **fruit** is a

prickly bur, containing 2-3 nuts tipped with hairs. The inner lining of the bur is plush-like. The **nuts** contain a sweet meat and were once gathered in large quantities for the market. The **wood** is soft, very durable, strong and splits easily. It is used for interior finishing and was (prior to the blight) in much demand for telephone poles, railroad ties and fence posts. The durability of the wood is due to the tannic acid which it contains.

## HORSECHESTNUT

*Aesculus hippocastanum* L.

Horsechestnut is not related to the native chestnut. It comes from Asia and the Balkan Peninsula and is generally planted as a shade and ornamental tree.



It is symmetrically round or oval in outline with a stiff branch habit. The tips of the branches curve slightly when mature. It has a heavy, luxuriant foliage of deep green which changes to bronze in early autumn. The large, opposite leaves with 5-7 leaflets, arranged palmately on a single stalk, distinguish it from any of Maine's native trees. Taken together with the pyramids of white flowers blossoming in the early spring and the large bur-like, leathery husk enclosing one or more smooth, mahogany-colored nuts, it is not easily confused with any other species. It makes a good shade tree but requires rich soil for best development. It is prone to a leaf blight. The fruit is poisonous when taken internally.

The **buds** are large, sticky, and nearly black. The wood is soft, light, and close grained. In Europe it is used for wood carving and veneer.