

Elms - The Important Distinctions

	American Elm <i>Ulmus americana</i>	Slippery Elm <i>Ulmus rubra</i>
Profile	Tall and variable in outline, yet typically vase-shaped.	Medium height. Head broad and almost flat.
Bark	Ashy gray. Inner bark not containing sticky substance.	Dark brown tinged with red. Inner bark contains sticky substance.
Leaves	Somewhat rough on upper surface and smooth on the lower. Short pointed tip.	Very rough on upper surface; hairy and nearly as rough on lower. Long pointed tip.
Buds	Brown and smooth. The terminal bud is cocked at a 45° angle from the tip of the twig.	Dark reddish brown and covered with rusty hairs.

INTRODUCED ELMs

English Elm (*Ulmus procera*) a native of Europe, is more compact, stiffer, and has a less spreading form than our native species. At a distance, it resembles oak rather than elm. It has denser foliage and a longer leafing period than our native elms, and it is less susceptible to insect troubles. Leaves are similar to those of American elm but are smaller and more hairy below. The rough, coarse bark is divided by fissures into rather large plates on old trees. The almost black buds and twigs are densely hairy.

Chinese or lacebark **Elm** (*Ulmus parvifolia*) and the **Siberian Elm** (*Ulmus pumila*) have been occasionally planted along our highways. Siberian elm trees are brittle. Leaves are quite small, generally only singly serrate. Chinese elm fruits in the autumn, unlike most other species of elm.

Scotch Elm (*Ulmus glabra*) is a native of Europe occasionally planted as a street tree in central and southern Maine, often mistaken for Slippery Elm. Leaves are simple to bear-paw shaped, and sandpaperly to the touch on the upper surface.

Camperdown Elm (*Ulmus glabra* var. *camperdowni*) is a short, spreading tree with pendulous branchlets and a round-topped head, thus its name also as the umbrella elm.