



**American Hop Hornbeam  
(Ironwood)**

*Ostrya virginiana*

Height: 30 feet

Spread: 20 feet

Sunlight: ○ ●

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Ironwood, Muscledwood

**Description:**

An underused small native woodland tree with exceptionally strong wood, tolerates shade very well; interesting hop-like seeds in late summer, layered habit of growth, flaking bark; very low maintenance, but somewhat slow growing

**Ornamental Features**

American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood) has dark green deciduous foliage on a tree with an oval habit of growth. The serrated pointy leaves turn lemon yellow in fall. It produces small clusters of tan hop-like fruit from late summer to mid fall.

**Landscape Attributes**

American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood) is an open deciduous tree with a shapely oval form. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Deer don't particularly care for this plant and will usually leave it alone in favor of tastier treats. It has no significant negative characteristics.

American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood) is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Shade



*American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood)  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*



*American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood)  
bark  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant  
Finder*



### Planting & Growing

American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood) will grow to be about 30 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 20 feet. It has a low canopy with a typical clearance of 4 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 70 years or more.

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is quite intolerant of urban pollution, therefore inner city or urban streetside plantings are best avoided, and will benefit from being planted in a relatively sheltered location. Consider applying a thick mulch around the root zone in winter to protect it in exposed locations or colder microclimates. This species is native to parts of North America.



*American Hop Hornbeam (Ironwood)  
flowers  
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder*

