



EASTERN HOPHORNBEAM

Ostrya virginiana (P. Mill.) K. Koch



The name “hophornbeam” refers to the fruit, which closely resembles the true hops.

Eastern hophornbeam or ironwood is a small tree with either an open or rounded crown. It reaches a height of 20–30 feet and a diameter of 6–10 inches. The branches are long and slender, with ends that are somewhat drooping.

It is a fairly rapid grower, especially in good soil. It grows on slopes and ridges having a dry, gravelly soil, and is often found in the shade of other species.

The **bark** is gray, and separates easily into thin, narrow, vertical scales, becoming finer and stringy on older trees.

The **leaves** are 2–3 inches long, egg-shaped to nearly oblong in outline, widest in the middle, hairy on both surfaces, alternate and sharply toothed. They are somewhat like those of yellow birch.

The **flowers** occur in catkins, which open with the leaf buds. The male catkins are pre-formed in the fall and are usually in clusters of three.

The **fruit** is bladder-like, encloses a ribbed nutlet and occurs in clusters. It ripens in September. The name





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The **twigs** are light brown, fine, tough and wiry, and have a small green pith.

The **wood** is very close-grained, heavy, very strong and is exceedingly hard when seasoned. It is used for tool handles, wedges for directional felling of trees, and firewood. In the past, it was used to make trip stakes on log hauling trucks (which contain, then release the logs from the truck beds), wagon tongues (the shaft where the horses are hitched) and other parts.

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Eastern Hophornbeam*

Circumference: 77"/70" Height: 63'/67'

Crown Spread: 38'/42'

Location: Livermore Falls/Pownall

*Tie



Eastern hophornbeam buds have tiny vertical grooves that can be seen with a magnifying glass.

