**Aesculus flava**
Yellow Buckeye

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

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**INTRODUCTION**

Yellow Buckeye reaches 60 to 75 feet in height with an oval to slightly spreading canopy and large, dark green leaves composed of five-fingered leaflets, casting dense shade below (Fig. 1). The thick canopy makes this tree well-suited for a tall screen or shade tree. Small yellow/green flowers appear in dense, upwardly-pointing, six to seven-inch-long, terminal panicles in early spring and are followed by 2.5-inch-long, smooth, pear-shaped capsules containing bitter, poisonous seeds. The leaves change to brilliant yellow before dropping in autumn.

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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Aesculus flava  
**Pronunciation:** ESS-kew-lus FLAY-vuh  
**Common name(s):** Yellow Buckeye, Sweet Buckeye  
**Family:** Hippocastanaceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 8A (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** native to North America  
**Uses:** recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; shade tree; specimen  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

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**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 60 to 75 feet  
**Spread:** 25 to 35 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-59, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval)
Leaflet venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaflet blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: spring flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown; green
Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

The tree has a striking, coarse texture and leaves which are as dark as any other tree, attracting attention as a specimen plant. But save it for large areas so the wonderful form of this large tree can be appreciated. Certainly not suited for small residences due to its overpowering size and texture. Leaf and flower litter in the summer and fall may be objectionable to some people. The nuts make good food for wildlife but you may not want it scattered along city streets.

A North American native, Yellow Buckeye grows best along stream beds in full sun or partial shade and should be planted in moist, well-drained soil rich in organic matter. It is not as susceptible to foliage diseases as *Aesculus hippocastanum*.

Propagation is by seed.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern are known at this time.