Fraxinus texensis
Texas Ash

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INTRODUCTION

Texas Ash creates a wonderful shade tree, its short trunk supporting a broad, rounded crown of seven-inch-long leaves divided into leaflets (Fig. 1). Unfortunately, it is rare in the trade. Trees slowly grow to about 50 feet tall but most are seen 25 to 30 feet tall. The leaves are dark green to olive green above and paler green below and cast a medium shade beneath the tree. Petioles are an attractive pale red to pink, and fall color is showy ranging from orange/red to purple. The inconspicuous flowers appear before the leaves emerge in spring, and are followed by the production of 1.5-inch-long, light red to pink, winged fruit, or samara. It often grows as a multi-stemmed tree in the wild on limestones soils in central Texas.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Fraxinus texensis
Pronunciation: FRACK-sih-nus teck-SEN-sis
Common name(s): Texas Ash
Family: Oleaceae
USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9A (Fig. 2)
Origin: native to North America
Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 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
Crown shape: oval; upright

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**Crown density:** moderate
**Growth rate:** slow
**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite
- **Leaf type:** odd pinnately compound
- **Leaflet margin:** entire; serrate
- **Leaflet shape:** obovate; ovate
- **Leaflet venation:** pinnate; reticulate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaflet blade length:** 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** orange; purple; red
- **Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** green
- **Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** round
- **Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch
- **Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** pink
- **Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; persistent on the tree; showy

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** requires pruning to develop strong structure
- **Breakage:** resistant
- **Current year twig color:** brown; gray
- **Current year twig thickness:** thick
Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high

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  
**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** long-term health usually not affected by pests

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Texas Ash grows in full sun on well-drained soil, either dry or wet, and prefers alkaline soil. It is very popular in Texas and Oklahoma, but could be cultivated and planted more in other areas. Trained to a central leader and a straight trunk it could be used for city street and parking lot tree planting. It could be grown in the east in areas with good drainage especially on sites which are not irrigated due to its low water requirement or drought tolerance. Texas Ash will tolerate both soil compaction and air pollution, making it well-suited for use as a street, parking lot or median tree. Not as susceptible to borers as other Ashes.

Propagation is by seed.

**Pests and Diseases**

No pests or diseases are of major concern. Probably borers on recently transplanted or stressed trees.