



Fraxinus texensis Texas Ash¹

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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

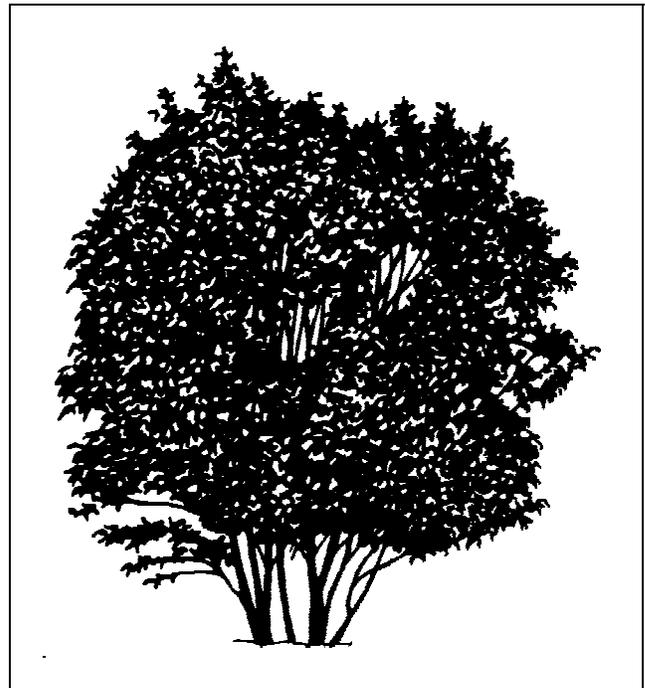


Figure 1. Middle-aged Texas Ash.

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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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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.