



Fagus sylvatica 'Pendula' Weeping European Beech¹

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INTRODUCTION

Weeping European Beech grows into a wide, weeping mass of green foliage, 30 to 50 feet tall and spreads 30 to 50 feet (Fig. 1). Branches normally grow up, sag to the horizontal, then sweep toward the ground in a graceful fashion. Young trees are often trained with a central leader for 10 feet or more into the crown, then the tree is allowed to weep to the ground. This can produce a tree wider than tall, or if side branches are removed, one that is tall and narrow. It grows slowly but is worth the wait. Leaves show a lustrous dark green color throughout the summer and form a very dense canopy. Some specimens have a narrow crown, others grow as wide as they are tall so allow plenty of room for growth. Not a tree for residential or other small landscapes. The branches are thin but not as flexible as those of weeping willow.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'

Pronunciation: FAY-gus sill-VAT-ih-kuh

Common name(s): Weeping European Beech

Family: *Fagaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4 through 7 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: specimen; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

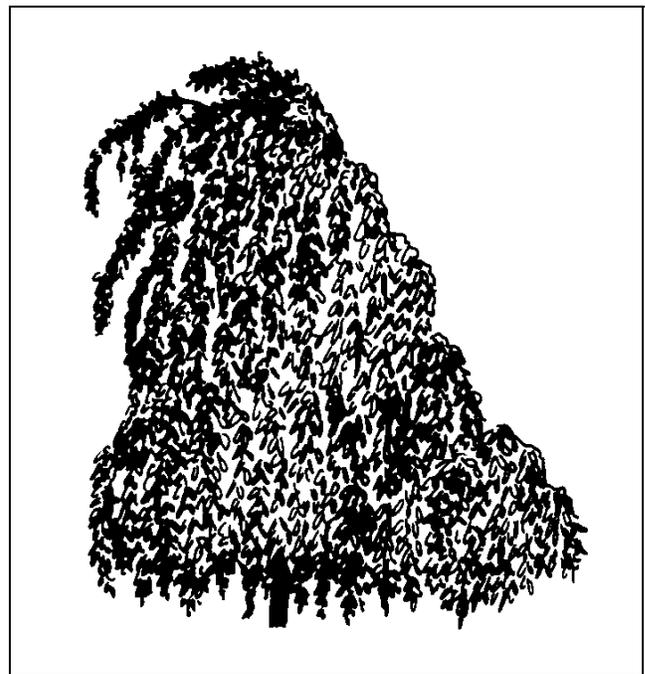


Figure 1. Middle-aged Weeping European Beech.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 50 feet

Spread: 30 to 60 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: weeping

Crown density: dense

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire; undulate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: copper

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts birds; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; no

significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown; gray

Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: low

Soil salt tolerance: poor

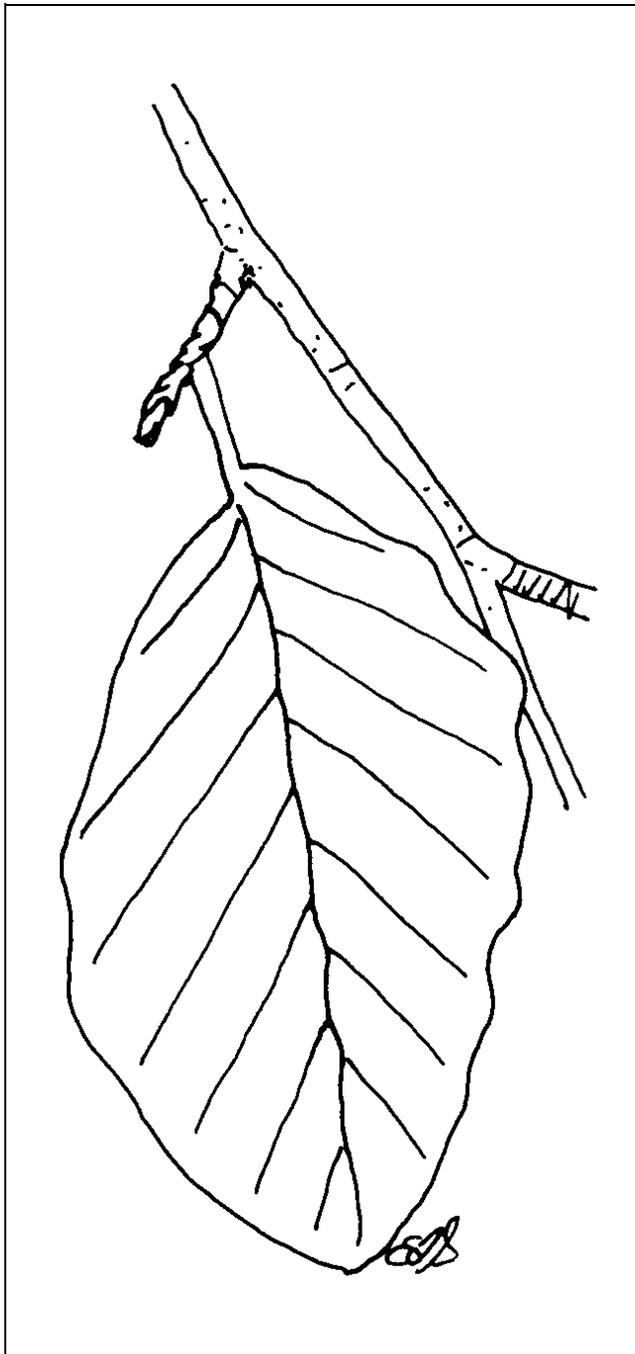


Figure 3. Foliage of Weeping European Beech.

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

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

Though not a street tree, it makes one of the finest specimens of all those available in North America for large-scale landscapes. It may be the most picturesque of all the weeping trees. It can be pruned to create a tunnel or walkway beneath the crown for pedestrians. It is probably best located in a large open area where people can enjoy it from a distance.

The tree grows slowly, is hard to transplant, and prefers a sunny location on moist, light soil. Weeping Beech is somewhat tolerant of heat and dry soil but it is best to locate it where it would receive adequate moisture. Over-watering can kill the roots due to the tree's intolerance of low soil oxygen. Not for clay soil unless drainage is very good and not for dry climates. A rather tricky tree to grow.

Pests

Most problems are seen on the bark.

Aphids colonies on the lower branches can be dislodged with a strong stream of water from the garden hose. Colonies are often disposed of by predatory insects.

Borers such as flat-headed appletree borer or two-lined chestnut borer bore into trees weakened by some stress. Prevent the insect infestations by keeping trees healthy with regular fertilization.

Regular inspections of the trunk and branches are suggested for early detection of scales. Horticultural oil sprays will help control scales.

Certain caterpillars can be controlled with sprays of *Bacillus thuringiensis*. Insect identification allows proper spray recommendations to be made.

Diseases

Some bark inhabiting fungi cause problems.

Several fungi cause leaf spots but are generally not serious to warrant chemical control.

Powdery mildew causes a white coating on the leaves. The disease is most common late in the season.

Bleeding canker forms cankers from which a brownish liquid oozes. Crown symptoms include leaves of smaller size and lighter green color than normal. In severe cases the leaves wilt and the branches die. Avoid feeding with high nitrogen fertilizers as it seems to worsen the condition of infected trees.

Beech bark disease occurs when the feeding site of woolly Beech scale is invaded by a fungus. The fungus kills the bark and, in the process, the insects. There are no satisfactory controls for the fungus. Control the disease by controlling the scale with a horticultural spray of oil.

Cankers infect, girdle, and kill branches. Prune out the infected branches.

During periods of high temperatures and low rainfall weeping Beech may scorch. Make sure trees are adequately watered.