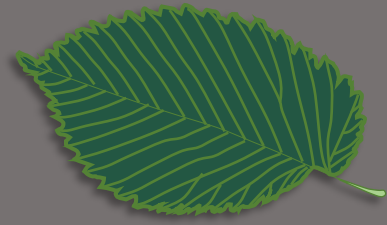


# American Elm

*Ulmus americana*



American elm, a stately tree devastated by Dutch elm disease, is native to Aitkin County. Once commonly planted as a street tree, only a few relatively isolated mature specimens can be found. Far more common are standing dead elm trees, killed by a fungus carried by several species of bark beetle. American elm leaves are rough to the touch on the top surface and are doubly serrated with pronounced veining, 4"-6" in length. 1/2" seeds are small and oval, with a central seed surrounded by a thin wing. Wood is heavy and tough; once used for boats, furniture, barrel staves, and saddle trees.

**Height:** 50' to 70'; once, exceptional trees could reach 100'

Growth rate of American elm varies; many cultivars can grow several feet per year while young.

## **Planting environment:**

*Soil composition:* Many; prefers rich loams, dislikes organic soils

*Soil moisture:* Moist, wet soils; can tolerate drier conditions

*Sunlight:* Full to partial sun (>4 hours of sun/day)

American elm is not a recommended species for planting, due to its continued susceptibility to Dutch elm disease. If choosing to plant, it is highly recommended to plant a cultivar of American elm bred for resistance against the disease.

## **Maintenance:**

To ensure the survival of existing trees, it is critically important to be on the lookout for bark beetle damage. Bark beetles will feed at small twigs, secondary branches, or main branches – remove inflected branches as quickly as possible, 5 to 10 feet below the lowest point of visible infection. Remove trees with significant infection or recently killed and burn, chip, or bury the wood. Reduce the breeding habitat of bark beetles by removing bark from firewood and dead or dying trees. Don't prune or wound trees between April and September.

## **Top diseases/pests:**

1. Dutch elm disease
2. Elm phloem necrosis

