



Aesculus glabra Ohio Buckeye¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

A true North American native, Ohio Buckeye forms a short trunk with a low branching structure, creating an oval to rounded canopy 40 to 50 feet wide on a tree 50 to 70 feet tall (Fig. 1). The four to six-inch-long, coarse, bright green, palmately compound leaves have an unpleasant odor when crushed, as do the twigs, giving this tree its other common name of Fetid Buckeye. The fragrance should be a warning sign for this plant since all parts of it are poisonous, a factor which should be considered when placing it in the landscape. One of the first trees to shed its leaves in autumn, Ohio Buckeye puts on a vivid display of bright orange and yellow fall foliage. The spring flowers are also quite showy, the erect, yellow/green, six-inch-high panicles decorating the branches. The one to two-inch-long, showy, brown fruits ripen in late summer and may become a litter problem since they are very prickly. These fruits are quite popular with squirrels and other wildlife.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Aesculus glabra*

Pronunciation: ESS-kew-lus GLAY-bruh

Common name(s): Ohio Buckeye, Fetid Buckeye

Family: *Hippocastanaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree

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

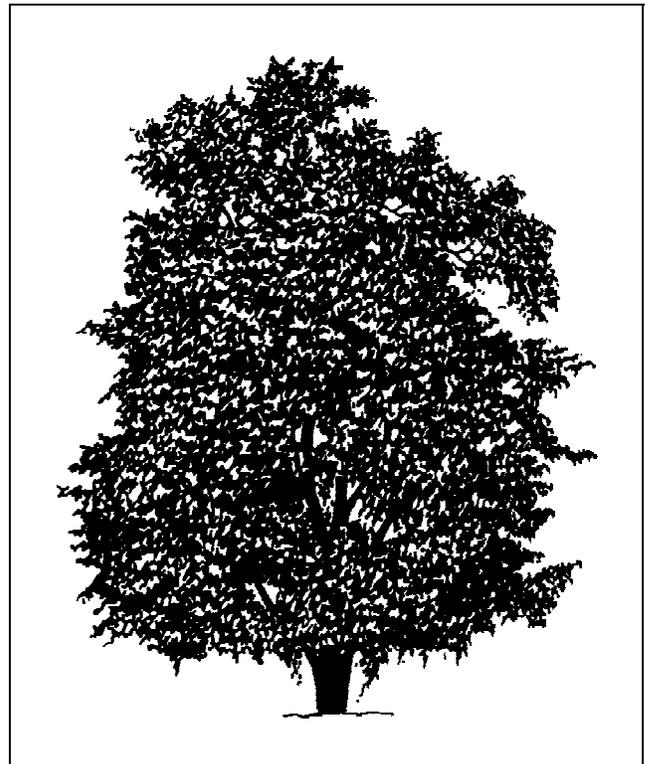


Figure 1. Mature Ohio Buckeye.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 70 feet

Spread: 40 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round

Crown density: dense

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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.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: palmately compound

Leaflet margin: serrate

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval); ovate

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaflet blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: orange; 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; reddish

Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

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

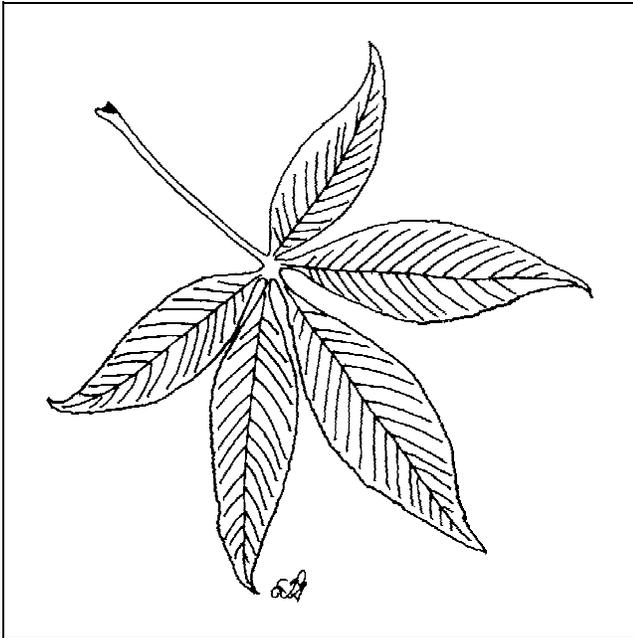


Figure 3. Foliage of Ohio Buckeye.

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

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

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Ozone sensitivity: sensitive or moderately tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Ohio Buckeye will grow in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, fertile soil but should not be exposed to extended drought or excessive heat, two factors which make this tree unsuitable for use as a street tree. Falling fruit would also be a problem along streets. It is suited for naturalized plantings or for establishing a native grove in a park. The fruit can be quite entertaining for children.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

No pests are of major concern.

Diseases

Leaf blotch, powdery mildew, and leaf scorch.