



# *Aesculus flava* Yellow Buckeye<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

Yellow Buckeye reaches 60 to 75 feet in height with an oval to slightly spreading canopy and large, dark green leaves composed of five-fingered leaflets, casting dense shade below (Fig. 1). The thick canopy makes this tree well-suited for a tall screen or shade tree. Small yellow/green flowers appear in dense, upwardly-pointing, six to seven-inch-long, terminal panicles in early spring and are followed by 2.5-inch-long, smooth, pear-shaped capsules containing bitter, poisonous seeds. The leaves change to brilliant yellow before dropping in autumn.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Scientific name:** *Aesculus flava*  
**Pronunciation:** ESS-kew-lus FLAY-vuh  
**Common name(s):** Yellow Buckeye, Sweet Buckeye  
**Family:** *Hippocastanaceae*  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 4 through 8A (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** native to North America  
**Uses:** recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; screen; shade tree; specimen  
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

## DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 60 to 75 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

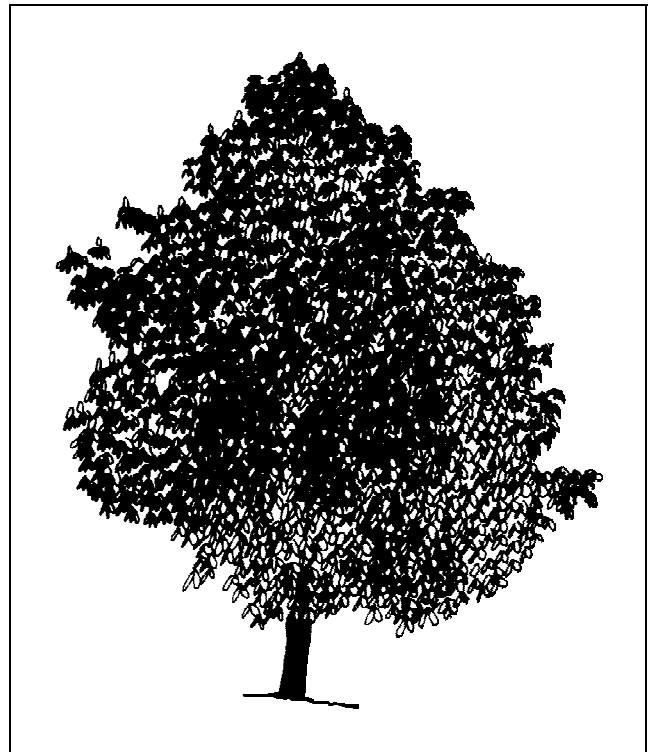


Figure 1. Middle-aged Yellow Buckeye.

**Crown shape:** oval  
**Crown density:** dense  
**Growth rate:** medium  
**Texture:** coarse

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** palmately compound  
**Leaflet margin:** serrate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Leaflet shape:** elliptic (oval)  
**Leaflet venation:** pinnate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaflet blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** 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; green  
**Current year twig thickness:** thick

### Culture

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

### 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

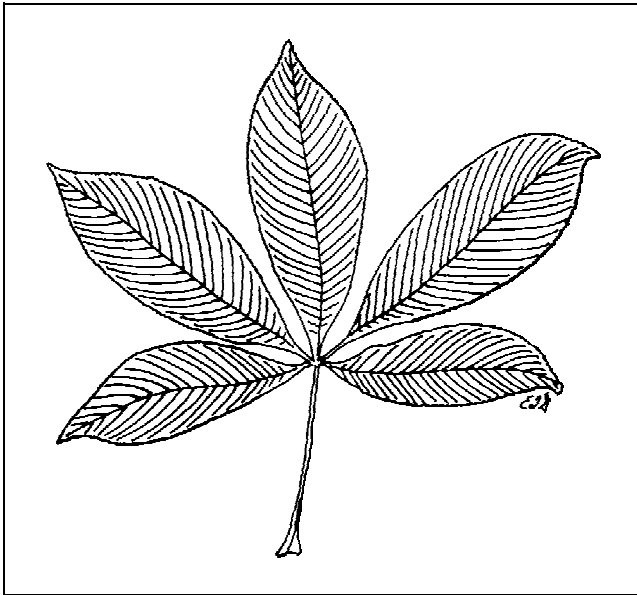


Figure 3. Foliage of Yellow Buckeye.

**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

The tree has a striking, coarse texture and leaves which are as dark as any other tree, attracting attention as a specimen plant. But save it for large areas so the wonderful form of this large tree can be appreciated. Certainly not suited for small residences due to its overpowering size and texture. Leaf and flower litter in the summer and fall may be objectionable to some people. The nuts make good food for wildlife but you may not want it scattered along city streets.

A North American native, Yellow Buckeye grows best along stream beds in full sun or partial shade and should be planted in moist, well-drained soil rich in organic matter. It is not as susceptible to foliage diseases as *Aesculus hippocastanum*.

Propagation is by seed.

### Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern are known at this time.