



## *Aesculus glabra* Ohio Buckeye<sup>1</sup>

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

### 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

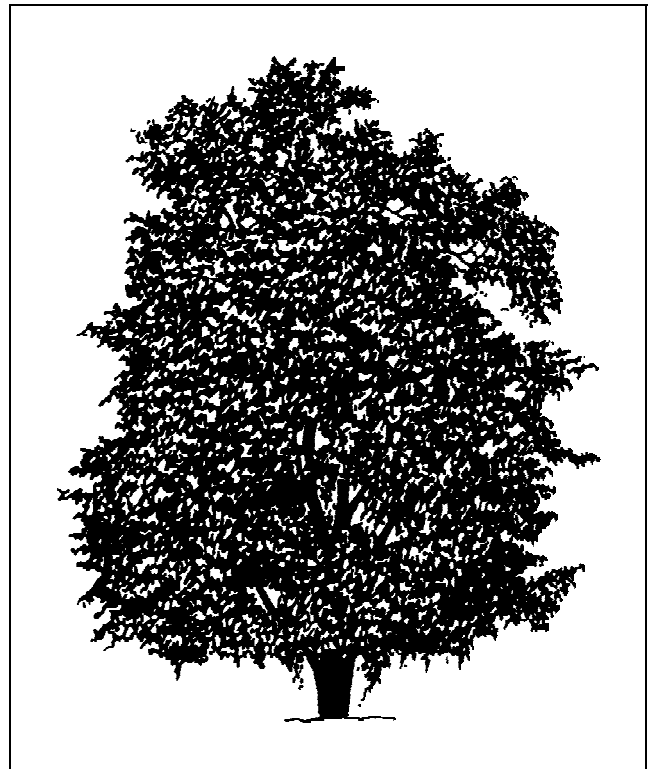


Figure 1. Mature Ohio Buckeye.

### 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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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

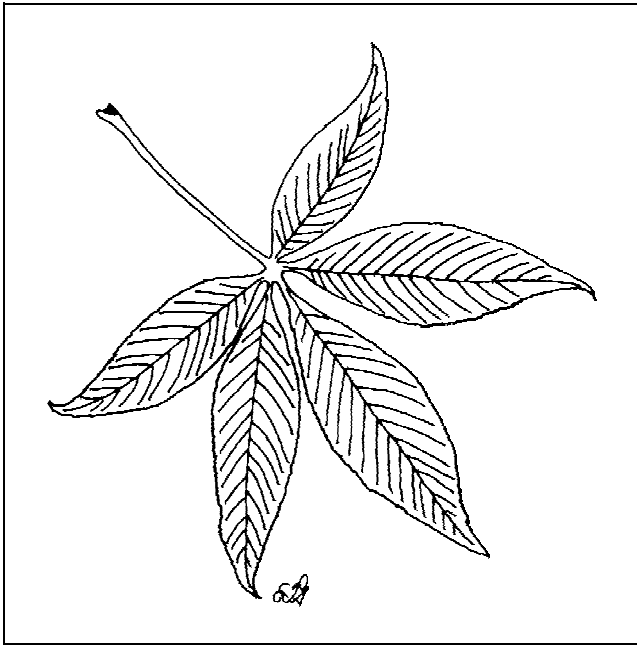


Figure 3. Foliage of Ohio Buckeye.

**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.