



beech

Fagus grandifolia

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The deciduous beech tree may grow to 100 feet tall with a trunk diameter of up to four feet. Its crown is rounded and widely spreading. The bark is smooth and gray. Beech bark is often carved on by people because it is soft. The buds are red-brown, smooth and up to three-fourths inch long. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Each leaf may be about four inches long and two and one-half inches wide. The leaf is toothed around its edges. The leaf is blue-green to yellow-green, smooth on the upper surface and smooth or finely hairy on the lower surface. The leafstalk is very short. The male and female flowers are separate but located on the same tree. The staminate, or male, flowers are arranged in small, spherical heads. The pistillate, or female, flowers are in groups of two. The fruit is a spiny bur, about three-fourths inch long. Each prickly, red-brown fruit contains one to three triangular nuts.

BEHAVIORS

The beech grows in rich woods, mainly along the eastern border of Illinois. Its flowers bloom after the leaves have unfolded. The wood of this deciduous tree is used for fuel, for making chairs and for tool handles.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: Cook County + Lake County + Wabash River border counties + southern tip + lower Mississippi River border counties

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.