



blue ash

Fraxinus quadrangulata

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

FEATURES

The blue ash is also known as the square-stemmed ash. This deciduous tree may attain a height of 70 feet with a trunk diameter of three feet. It has an irregular crown. Its square twigs are a distinctive feature. The gray, scaly bark has diamond-shaped furrows. The gray, hairy buds are rounded, up to one-half inch long. The pinnately compound leaves are arranged opposite each other on the stem. Each leaf has five to eleven leaflets. The leaflet is lance-shaped, pointed at the tip, about six inches long and about three inches wide. The leaflet is toothed along the edges, yellow-green and smooth on the upper surface, pale and with hair tufts on the lower surface. Small flowers are produced in branched clusters. The flower is purple with no petals. The oblong, winged fruit is notched at the tip, up to two inches long and one-half inch wide. The fruit has a single seed near the bottom.

BEHAVIORS

The blue ash may be found in the northern two-thirds of Illinois. It grows in moist woods and on wooded slopes and limestone cliffs. Flowering occurs from March through April. The wood of this tree is used for flooring. Its inner bark produces a blue dye when placed in water, giving this plant its common name. The leaflets turn yellow in the fall.

HABITATS

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

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: northern 2/3

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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