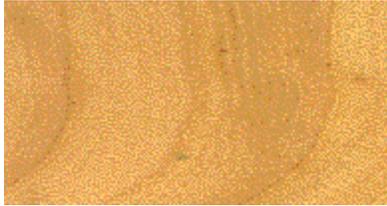


## American Elm - *Ulums Americana*



Deciduous. Height 8 to 90 feet tall. Trunk diameter of 2 to 5 feet. Before 1920 it was not unusual to find American elm trees that surpassed 125 feet in height, but due to Dutch Elm Disease (DED) full sized trees are becoming scarce. Today, the National Register Of Big Tree records the tallest American elm as measuring 100 feet with a trunk circumference of 312 inches. It grows in Louisville, Kansas.

Distribution of elm trees ranges from Newfoundland and Nova Scotia in Canada south to Florida along the entire Eastern Seaboard. Although they are found in East Texas, no native American elm grows west of the Rocky Mountains. Timber production of elm is chiefly in the Great Lake States and in the Central and Southern States.

In the woodlands, American elm grows in low, rich, hilly soil, often by stream banks, A very large hardwood tree, the trunk often divides into two or three large limbs down near ground level giving it a vase-shaped form. Elm`s wood is light greyish brown and occasionally pink-brown. It is smooth and straight grained with a finely waved pattern. It has conspicuous growth rings much like ash. It is moderately hard, heavy, stiff and shock resistant. Though somewhat difficult to season, once it is dried, elm has excellent steam bending qualities and water resistant properties. Elm is difficult to split and work with hand tools. Machine tools are more successful. Elm holds nails and screws well.



The supply of American elm wood is threatened by the devastating Dutch Elm tree disease which has killed hundreds of thousands of trees. But, elm lumber is still available, although at moderately high prices. It is sold as both lumber and veneer. Due to its muddy color, it is used most often as a paint grade hardwood. The wood from American elm is remarkably durable even when constantly wet. It is used for dam and lock construction. Elm logs hollowed out in Roman times for use as water pipes, have been un-earthed in good order. In fine furniture-making,

elm is used for chair seats and bent parts. It is used for decorative paneling, stair treads and finish millwork in interiors. Elm is also used in the manufacture of agricultural implements, boxes, barrels and crates. It is also used for caskets. Often associated with death in folklore, an old jingle goes: "Elm hateth man and waiteth." This may be because elm is famous for its tendency to drop a big branch without warning on a still summer day!