




## BLACK ASH

### Information for Vermont Landowners

**IDENTIFICATION:** There are three native species of ash trees in Vermont: white ash, green ash, and black ash. All three species have stout, opposite-branching twigs, and compound leaves.

White ash grow mostly in rich upland forests and along floodplains. White ash bark rigid and distinctively diamond patterned. Green ash look very similar to white ash, and are commonly found along Vermont’s roadways and in urban areas. In the woods, they thrive in wetter environments than white ash, such as clayplain forests, along lakeshores, and in swamps. Green ash have a characteristically droopy canopy, and a slightly shorter “petioliole” – the little stalk that attaches the leaflet to the midrib of the leaf.

Black ash have stout, opposite-branching twigs. They grow throughout northeastern North America in rich, wet areas such as swamps, ditches, seeps, and floodplains. Depending on the site and hydrology, black ash can co-occur with a variety of other tree species, including red maple, eastern hemlock, northern white cedars, and eastern larch trees. There are several characteristics that help to identify a black ash tree, particularly the corky, scaly, furrowed bark.

BARK	BUDS	LEAF
		
<p>Corky, flaky, furrowed bark.</p> <p>--</p> <p>*If the roots are exposed, you can see distinctive white, flaky lenticels on the roots.</p>	<p>The terminal winter bud (found at the end of a twig) is separated from the uppermost lateral buds (the side buds occurring closest to the end of the twig). The bud of a black ash is typically a dark, chocolate chip cover (while white and green have a more rustic brown color).</p>	<p>Compound leaves. The leaflets are directly attached to the midrib of the leaf. There are typically 7-13 of these unstalked leaflets per leaf.</p>

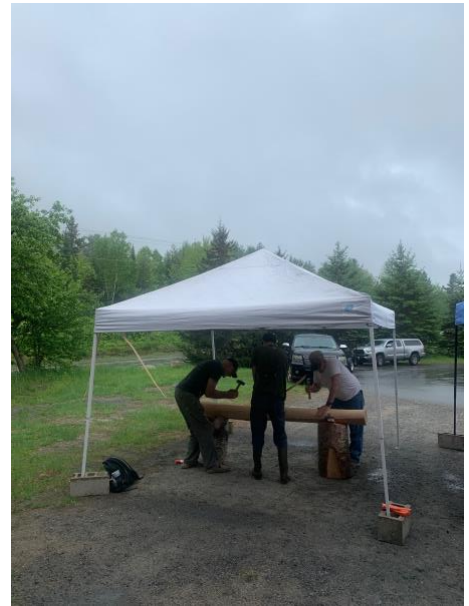
More identification questions? Check out [Go Botany](http://GoBotany.com). Or, email [Joanne.Garton@vermont.gov](mailto:Joanne.Garton@vermont.gov)

## SIGNIFICANCE:

**Emerald Ash Borer (EAB).** Black ash have no known resistance to EAB.

**Cultural significance to indigenous peoples.** Wherever black ash trees are found, they have close ties to the indigenous peoples of North America. For the Abenaki people of Vermont, black ash bear deep cultural importance. In the Wabanaki creation story, it is told that the Abenaki people emerged from the ash. Black ash is probably most well-known for its use in traditional basket making practices, as well as in fish weirs, lacrosse sticks, pipe stems, thwarts for birch bark canoes, woven furniture, and barrel hoops.

**Ecological significance.** It's often said that black ash "like to get their feet wet." Black ash trees are able to retain a lot of water, and mediate the hydrologic regimes during the wet seasons. As this species disappears from regional ecosystems, some of our forested wetlands are likely to transition towards a more shrub-dominated landscape, because without black ash, the conditions will likely become too wet for other tree species to establish. This concern is in parts of the Midwest (Minnesota, Wisconsin, etc), where black ash stands can extend over tens to hundreds of acres. Black ash also produce high quality leaf litter, and are provide important habitat and food for several species of birds and wildlife.



## WANT TO SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR BLACK ASH TREES?

### 1. Basket-Quality Trees.

If some of the black ash on your property are straight, healthy, and at least five inches in diameter, there might be a Vermont basketmaker who is interested in harvesting, processing, and making baskets from your tree. If you're interested in sharing information about the tree, [click here](#) to access the intake form managed by the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program (VT UCF). VT UCF's goal is to connect basketmakers with basket quality trees before EAB extirpates black ash from Vermont's wetland ecosystems.



### 2. Vermont Black Ash Inventory.

To gather more information about the distribution and health of black ash in Vermont, there's an iNaturalist project that's collecting uploaded observations. If you're keen on checking out the project or adding observations, you can check out the project [here](#).