

Black Ash - The Tree

Ehsa is the Mohawk word for black ash

Fraxinus nigra, Marsh

The ashes (and the Ashleaf Maple—Boxelder) are the only native trees with opposite feather compound leaves.

Ashes (*Fraxinus*) belong to the olive family.

Identification of ash species is not always easy, if winged fruit (seeds) are present they are helpful in identification.

According to Petrides: Black ash is a tree of the swamps and bottomlands whose leaflets are not stalked. The 7-11 leaflets are always toothed. Twigs, round and hairless, rather dull. Leaf scars not deeply notched. Buds very dark, nearly black. Trunk bark generally tight and furrowed but may be somewhat scaly. Leaves 12" - 16". Height 40'-80'; diameter 1'-2'. Flowers April-May. Fruit blunt on both ends, winged to the base, seeds not plump, June-Sept.

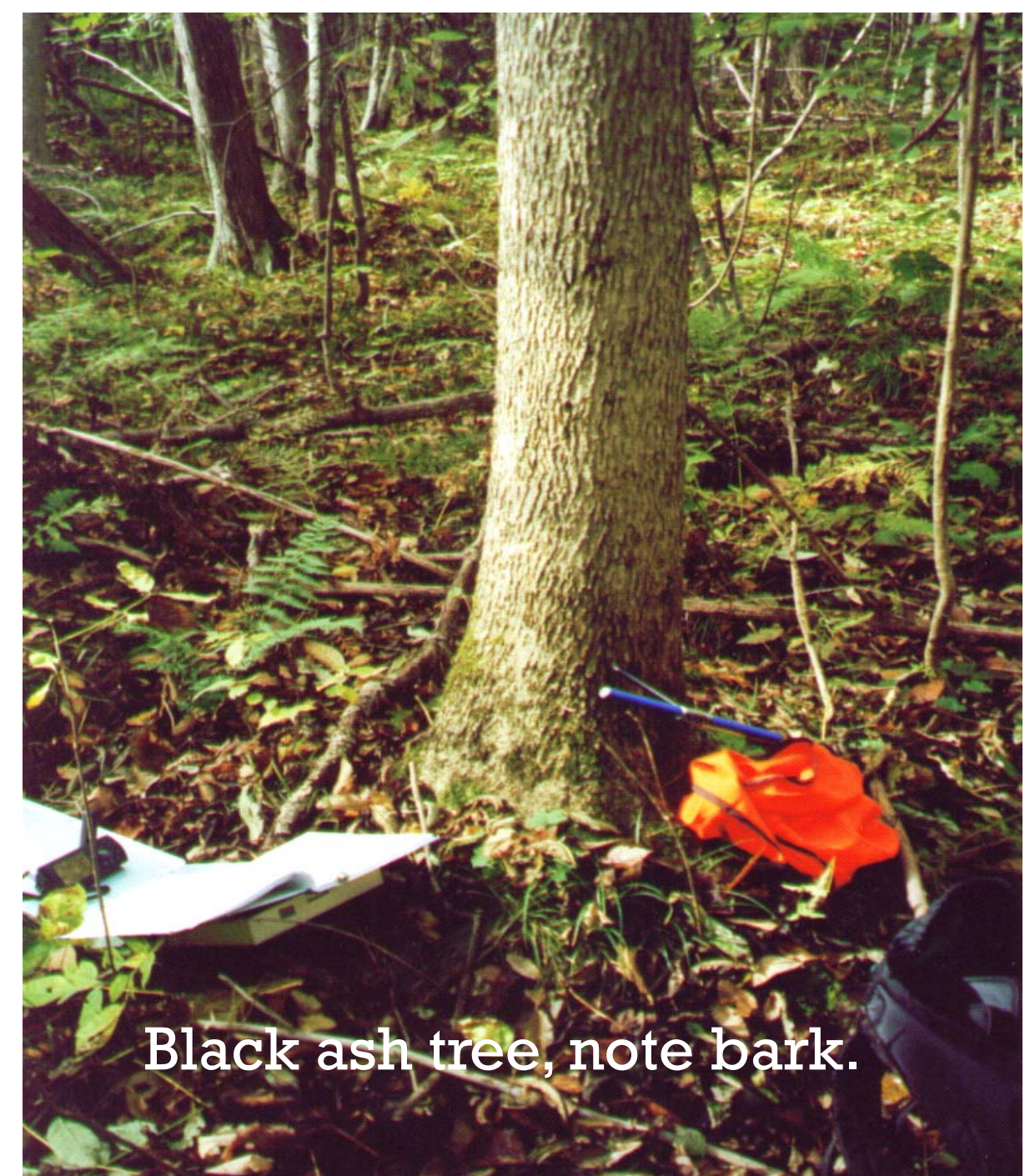
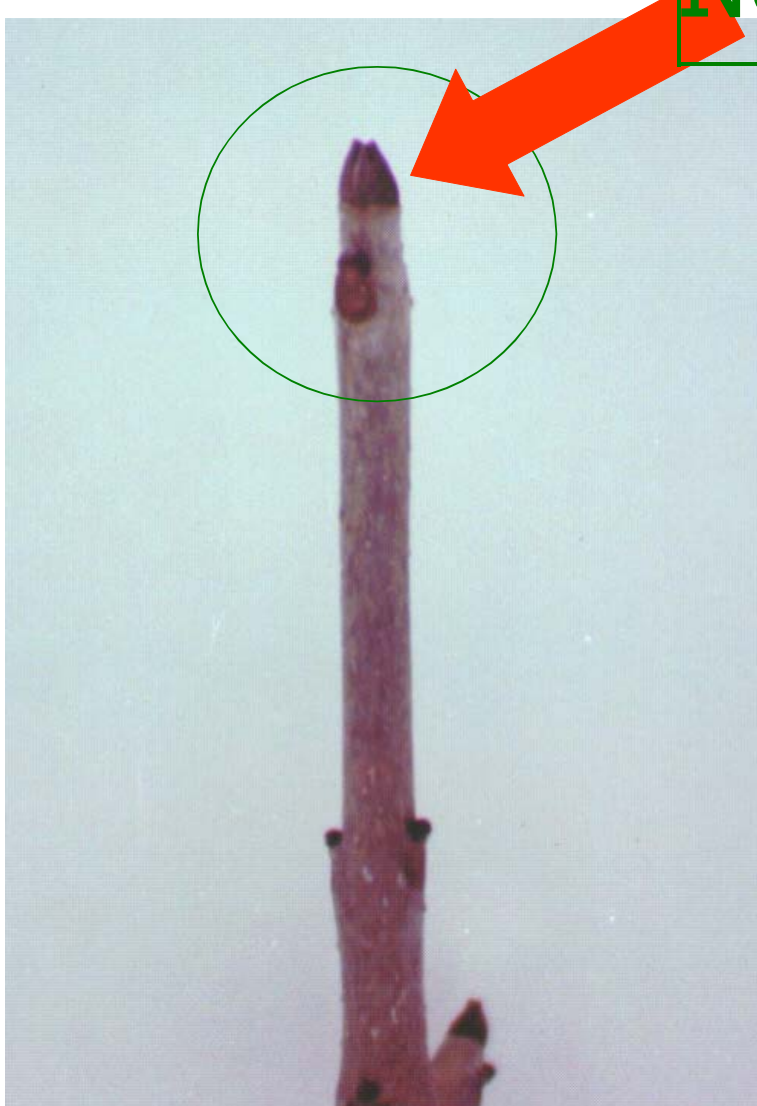


Black ash leaf and seeds.

Black ash is one of the many common names of *Fraxinus nigra*. To the Maine Indians it is known as brown ash, it is also called hoop ash, water ash, swamp ash and basket ash. These common names are descriptive of the many uses of black ash, its outward appearance, its qualities and habitat.

Black ash is a small to medium sized, shade intolerant tree that is primarily a swamp edge species. The bark is grayish, and develops a blistered, corky appearance with age. This distinguishes it from other ashes that have a typically ridged and furrowed bark. The twigs are moderately stout and grey, with dark brown to black rounded buds that are oppositely paired. The terminal bud (at tip of twig) is larger than the lateral buds (on sides of twig) and is conical in shape. The Conservationist, January-February 1988.

Note the "black" bud.



Black ash tree, note bark.

Recommended Tree Identification Guides and Books

Petersens Field Guides, Eastern Trees, George A. Petrides.

A Guide to Field Identification, Trees of North America. C. Frank Brockman. Golden Books.

Trees of the Northern United States and Canada. John Laird Farrar.