

# School-to-Nature



American Elm was commonly used at the sides of city streets, and as a showpiece tree in front of homes.

## American Elm Tree

Of the many species of Elm Trees in North America (the species name is *Ulmus*), the most

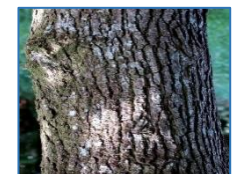
On CC properties are the Slippery Elm known as Red Elm- a shrubby elm, and American Elm known as White Elm which is a tree. If they reach 10 inches trunk they might be susceptible to the disease. New varieties are immune but those are not ours. Leaves attract the caterpillar for the mourning-cloak butterfly, which depends on elms.



common in Wisconsin is the American Elm, also called White Elm or Water Elm. An American Elm tree averages 100 feet in height, and spreads to 60 feet wide, so it throws a lot of shade on a sunny day. Elms, like most other leafy trees, are called deciduous, because they drop their leaves in fall and grow new ones every spring.

Here are ways to identify American Elm leaves: they are oval, pointed at each end. Each leaf has a center vein with smaller veins in very straight rows to the edge of the leaf. Each leaf has saw-tooth edges. Leaves grow alternately down the twig coming from the branch. See the photo for details. Leaves also have a smooth top and a rough underside. Leaves average about 4" long.

The Elm Tree typically has multiple extended trunks coming out of a tall main trunk, as you can see in the top photos. The bark has detailed vertical furrows



with scales and deep openings. Elm flowers in spring (photo at left) produce hordes of greenish-tan seeds (shown in the photo lower left) called samaras, a favorite food of opossums, squirrels, woodpeckers, and raccoons.

# School-to-Nature

American Elm is prone to health problems, including phloem necrosis (infection of the sap). Elms also fell prey to the insect causing Dutch Elm disease, which spread from Ohio in 1930 over the entire nation by the 1960s, killing every mature elm. Elms surviving now may be immune to Dutch Elm disease. When we see an elm maturing on Conservancy lands such as King's Corner, we hope it will be a survivor.

June 2022 BH / DL