Slippery Elm

Ulmus rubra



Slippery Elm
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 60 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Red Elm

Description:

A large shade tree native to riverbanks across much of North America, this relative of the better known American elm is distinctly more upright in habit, a good choice for narrower spaces; not reliably resistant to DED so use where this isn't a problem

Ornamental Features

Slippery Elm has dark green deciduous foliage on a tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. The serrated pointy leaves turn an outstanding yellow in the fall. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up.

Landscape Attributes

Slippery Elm is a deciduous tree with an upright spreading habit of growth. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a high maintenance tree that will require regular care and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Disease

Slippery Elm is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Shade
- Hedges/Screening
- Windbreaks and Shelterbelts

Planting & Growing

Slippery Elm will grow to be about 60 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 7 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a fast rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 50 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH, and is able to handle environmental salt. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This species is not originally from North America.