**Fagus sylvatica** - European Beech (*Fagaceae*)

*Fagus sylvatica* is a graceful, slow-growing, large tree for shade or specimen usage. European Beech has many cultivars available for growth habit and foliage variation.

**FEATURES**

**Form**
- large deciduous tree
- maturing at 60' tall x 40' wide
- upright oval growth habit for the species and many cultivars
- slow growth rate

**Culture**
- full sun to partial shade
- performs best in deep, moist, well-drained, slightly acid soils
- propagated by grafting or seeds

**Texture**
- medium to fine texture in foliage and fine-textured when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare (except in youth, when the branching is sparse and quite open)

**Assets**
- dense shade at maturity
- branching nearly to the ground
- graceful or architecturally interesting branching, depending upon cultivar
- smooth medium-gray bark
- several foliage and growth habit variants
- nuts attract wildlife in autumn

**Liabilities**
- slow growth
- awkwardly and sparsely branched in youth
- not urban tolerant
- surface roots with age

**Habitat**
- Zones 5 to 7
- Native to Europe

**SELECTIONS**

**Alternates**
- large shade or specimen trees with alternative broadleaf foliage colors (*Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King', 'Crimson Sentry', 'Drummondii', etc., *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Aureomarginatum'; other species of trees exist with this trait, but they are often weak-growing)

**Cultivars – Variants – Related species**

- 'Asplenifolia' - Cutleaf European Beech - deeply incised, almost fern-like foliage, yielding a very fine-textured specimen tree in summer
- 'Dawyckii' - Dawyck European Beech - a twisting columnar form, yielding an extremely narrow upright focal point tree
- 'Pendula' - Weeping European Beech - branches arch to yield a spreading, pendulous tree
- 'Roseomarginata' ('Tricolor') - Tricolor European Beech - variegated foliage emerges dark bronzed with a lavender margin, then turns to dark green and pink during the summer, matures to light green and cream in early autumn, and finally becomes somewhat golden in late autumn
- 'Riversii' - Rivers European Beech - dark purple-foliaged form, holding this color for most of the summer, becoming dark bronzed by late summer

**Foliage**
- medium to dark green and short-petioled
- ovate to elliptical, entire or somewhat crenate along the margins, usually with an undulating margin
- autumn color yellowish green, golden, or yellow-brown

**Flowers**
- separate male and female flowers on the same tree (monoeccious), flowering in late Apr. and early May
- flowers are relatively insignificant and partially obscured by the expanding foliage

**Fruits**
- three-sided nuts, from 1-3 nuts per fruit, exposed as the bristly husk splits open in Sept. and Oct.
- readily devoured by squirrels and larger birds

**Twigs**
- somewhat thin stems, olive to brown, with prominently long, pointed, tan winter buds
- twigs often lie more or less within the plane of the branch, for a layered branching habit

**Trunk**
- very thin and smooth, medium gray, and quite ornamental in winter

**Function**
- specimen, focal point, or wildlife attraction tree

**Texture**
- medium to fine texture in foliage and fine-textured when bare
- thick density in foliage and when bare (except in youth, when the branching is sparse and quite open)

**Assets**
- dense shade at maturity
- branching nearly to the ground
- graceful or architecturally interesting branching, depending upon cultivar
- smooth medium-gray bark
- several foliage and growth habit variants
- nuts attract wildlife in autumn

**Liabilities**
- slow growth
- awkwardly and sparsely branched in youth
- not urban tolerant
- surface roots with age

**Habitat**
- Zones 5 to 7
- Native to Europe

**SELECTIONS**

**Alternates**
- large shade or specimen trees with alternative broadleaf foliage colors (*Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King', 'Crimson Sentry', 'Drummondii', etc., *Liriodendron tulipifera* 'Aureomarginatum'; other species of trees exist with this trait, but they are often weak-growing)

**Cultivars – Variants – Related species**

- 'Asplenifolia' - Cutleaf European Beech - deeply incised, almost fern-like foliage, yielding a very fine-textured specimen tree in summer
- 'Dawyckii' - Dawyck European Beech - a twisting columnar form, yielding an extremely narrow upright focal point tree
- 'Pendula' - Weeping European Beech - branches arch to yield a spreading, pendulous tree
- 'Roseomarginata' ('Tricolor') - Tricolor European Beech - variegated foliage emerges dark bronzed with a lavender margin, then turns to dark green and pink during the summer, matures to light green and cream in early autumn, and finally becomes somewhat golden in late autumn
- 'Riversii' - Rivers European Beech - dark purple-foliaged form, holding this color for most of the summer, becoming dark bronzed by late summer

**Foliage**
- medium to dark green and short-petioled
- ovate to elliptical, entire or somewhat crenate along the margins, usually with an undulating margin
- autumn color yellowish green, golden, or yellow-brown

**Flowers**
- separate male and female flowers on the same tree (monoeccious), flowering in late Apr. and early May
- flowers are relatively insignificant and partially obscured by the expanding foliage

**Fruits**
- three-sided nuts, from 1-3 nuts per fruit, exposed as the bristly husk splits open in Sept. and Oct.
- readily devoured by squirrels and larger birds

**Twigs**
- somewhat thin stems, olive to brown, with prominently long, pointed, tan winter buds
- twigs often lie more or less within the plane of the branch, for a layered branching habit

**Trunk**
- very thin and smooth, medium gray, and quite ornamental in winter

**Function**
- specimen, focal point, or wildlife attraction tree