

# *Ulmus parvifolia* - Lacebark Elm (*Ulmaceae*)

*Ulmus parvifolia* is perhaps the best all-around Elm for its combination of clean foliage, autumn color, ornamental bark, and resistance to Dutch elm disease.

## Form



## FEATURES

- large shade tree
- maturing at about 50' tall x 60' wide
- upright oval growth habit in youth, becoming spreading, rounded, or broad-vased with age
- medium growth rate

## Culture

- full sun to partial sun
- best performance occurs in full sun in moist, well-drained soils, but it is very urban tolerant, including adaptability to poor soils, dry soils, soils of various pH, heat, and drought
- propagated by seeds or rooted stem cuttings
- Elm Family, with no disease or pest problems of ornamental significance, including its resistance to Dutch elm disease
- moderately available in B&B form

## Foliage

- dark green and shiny, alternate, elliptical to ovate, serrated, nearly symmetrical at the base, and unusually small for an Elm (usually only 1.5" long)
- autumn color is an excellent mixture of yellow, gold, orange, red, purple, and green, and coloring very late, in early- to mid-Nov.



## Flowers

- inflorescences open in Aug. and early Sept., are greenish-yellow, occur in the leaf axils, and are noticeable but ornamentally insignificant, being rather small and hidden among the foliage

## Fruits

- initial color of the fruits is a striking lime green, quickly maturing to a deep russet, both of which contrast well against the dark green, shiny foliage rapidly growing in Sept. and maturing in Oct., with the small samaras notched at their apex and hanging in clusters from the leaf axils

## Twigs

- the mature first-year gray stems are very slender, slightly zigzag, ultra-fine textured, and with very small winter buds

## Trunk

- usually single-trunked but branching at about 5-8' off the ground into several co-dominant trunks the give the tree its spreading, rounded, or broad-vased growth habit
- trunk diameter at its base at maturity is 3-4' of

caliper, which allows for a large surface area for the ornamental bark to be displayed upon, in addition to the several co-dominant trunks and many branches in the canopy

- young bark is a flaky brown-gray color, but mature bark is an exfoliating, mottled, and flaky combination of gray, green, orange, tan, and red-brown, and greatly increases in beauty with age

## USAGE

### Function

- shade or specimen tree, giving dappled shade in youth

### Texture

- medium-fine texture in foliage and fine texture when bare
- open to average density in foliage but thick density when bare

### Assets

- excellent autumn color mixture that transitions very late in the landscape
- ornamental bark with age
- fine-textured winter twigs that are semi-pendulous with age, and a broad-vased growth habit with large spreading trunks
- urban tolerant

### Liabilities

- marginally hardy in severe zone 5 winters

### Habitat

- species form is generally hardy from zones 5 to 8 (cultivars range from a extra-hardy zone 4 to a tender zone 7 in terms of their northern range cold hardiness)
- Native to the Orient

## SELECTIONS

### Alternates

- trees with ornamental bark (*Acer griseum*, *Betula papyrifera*, *Fagus sylvatica*, *Syringa reticulata*, *Zelkova serrata*, etc.)

- shade tree members of the Elm Family that are resistant to Dutch elm disease and are of ornamental quality (*Ulmus americana* 'Delaware #2', *Ulmus* 'Homestead', *Ulmus* 'Pioneer', *Ulmus* 'Regal', *Ulmus* 'Urban', *Zelkova serrata*)

### Cultivars – Variants – Related species

- the species form is still the predominate form available; however, a number of cultivars exist based upon superior growth rate, summer foliage, autumn color, ornamental bark, and variable growth habits, but none have yet become widely established in the nursery trade:

- 'Emer 1' = Athena™ Lacebark Elm (PP7551) - from Bailey Nursery; selection noted for its broad rounded habit and attractive bark.

