






# Ostrya virginiana

## (Eastern) Hop-hornbeam, Ironwood

Tried and True  
Native Plant Selections  
for the Mid-Atlantic

Despite being one of the hardest of [native](#)\* woods, Hop-hornbeam is undesirable in commercial forests. It provides interest as an ornamental though, with [fluted](#) trunk, exfoliating bark, and drooping clusters of sac-like pods that resemble the fruit of hops, hence its common name.



Tree	Tree, Flowers, Close-up of Fruit/Leaves, Bark			
Height: 25-50 feet				
Spread: 20-35 feet				
Bloom Color: Tan/brown (male), light green (female)				
Characteristics				
Small, graceful, <a href="#">deciduous</a> , understory tree with rounded top and long slender branches				
<a href="#">Alternate</a> , <a href="#">elliptic</a> to <a href="#">ovate</a> , doubly-serrate leaves				
Flowers—male (present through winter) and female (April to June)—appear as catkins on the same tree				
<a href="#">Strobilus</a> resembling hops: drooping cluster of papery, inflated <a href="#">bracts</a> , each containing an <a href="#">ovoid nutlet</a>				
Yellow or copper fall leaves may <a href="#">persist</a> into winter				
Gray-brown, twisting trunk with “muscle-like” features and narrow rectangular strips of exfoliating <a href="#">bark</a>				
Attributes				
Tolerates <a href="#">clay</a> , rocky, and dry soils and sun; intolerant of flooding and especially of salt				
No serious pests or diseases; <a href="#">deer</a> seldom severely damage				
Adaptable but slow-growing				
Attracts birds like downy woodpecker, purple finch				
Growing and Maintenance Tips				
<a href="#">Soil Requirements</a> : Moist, well-drained			<a href="#">Ailanthus altissima</a> - Tree of Heaven	
<a href="#">Light Requirements</a> : Partial Shade, Shade				
<a href="#">Water Requirements</a> : Dry, Moist				
Transplant as a balled or burlapped plant				
Use as an ornamental lawn or street tree, or in a woodland garden	*It is native to DC and most counties in PA. In DE, it is rare in the Piedmont and absent in the Coastal Plain. In VA, it is common in the mountains, frequent in the Piedmont, and infrequent in the Coastal Plain.			
<a href="#">Hardiness</a> : USDA Zones 3-9				

developed by Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, serving Arlington and Alexandria

Images by Elaine Mills, National Garden, U.S. Botanic Garden and Meadowlark Botanical Gardens and by Mary Free (bottom left), Arlington, VA