

**American beech** *Fagaceae Fagus grandifolia* Ehrh.  symbol: **vTree**  
FAGR

**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, elliptical to oblong-ovate, 2 1/2 to 5 1/2 inches long, pinnately-veined, 11-14 pairs of veins, with each vein ending in a sharp distinct tooth, shiny green above, very waxy and smooth, slightly paler below.

**Flower:** Species is monoecious; male flowers borne on globose heads hanging from a slender 1 inch stalk, female flowers borne on shorter spikes, appearing just after leaves in the spring.

**Fruit:** Nuts are irregularly triangular, shiny brown and edible, found in pairs within a woody husk covered with spines, 1/2 to 3/4 inch long, maturing in the fall.

**Twig:** Very slender, zigzag, light brown in color; buds are long (3/4 inch), light brown, and slender, covered with overlapping scales (best described as "cigar-shaped"), widely divergent from the stems, almost looking like long thorns.

**Bark:** The bark is smooth, thin, and gray in color even on the largest stems. Beech bark diseases severely deforms the smooth bark.

**Form:** A medium to large tree up to 100 feet tall with a rounded crown. Often found in thickets produced by root suckering. Old trees may be surrounded by a ring of young beech.

**Looks like:** [European beech](#) - [downy serviceberry](#) - [American chestnut](#) - [sawtooth oak](#)



**Additional Range Information:**  
*Fagus grandifolia* is native to North America. Range may be expanded by planting. [See states reporting American beech.](#)

**External Links:**  
[USDAFS Silvics of North America](#)  
[USDAFS Additional Silvics](#)  
[Landowner Factsheet](#)  
[USDA Plants Database](#)  
[Horticulture](#)

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