

AMERICAN ELM

Ulmus americana L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: White elm, Gray elm.

FORM: Usually 60-100 feet high, with trunk diameter 2-5 feet, under optimum conditions 120-140 feet high, with trunk 6-11 feet in diameter, with crown spread of more than 70 feet, occasionally may be 60 feet or more without a branch, more commonly divided 30-40 feet above ground into numerous upright limbs, gradually spreading and forming an inversely conic round-topped head.

BARK: Mature bark 1-1 1/2 inch thick, rough, ashy-gray, irregularly divided by deep fissures into broad scaly ridges.

TWIGS: Slender, at first greenish and pubescent, later smooth and reddish-brown, roughened by leaf scars and lenticels, base of twig marked with persistent ring-like bud-scale scars.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oval or obovate-oblong, 4-6 inches long, 1-3 inches wide, acuminate at apex, rounded and inequilateral at base, coarsely doubly serrate, dark green and glabrate, slightly scabrous above, paler and soft pubescent or glabrous below.

FLOWERS: Perfect, appear before the leaves in long pedunculate, 3-4 flowered inflorescences from the axils of the inner scales of the flower buds, each bud giving rise to 5-8 fascicles, calyx reddish-green, anthers reddish, styles light green.

FRUIT A one-seeded, oval to obovate-oblong, long-stalked, pale green samara, 1/2 inch long, deeply notched at apex, teeth incurved and overlapping.

WINTER BUDS: Terminal bud absent; leaf buds ovate, acute, chestnut-brown, about 1/8 inch long; flower buds slightly larger, borne below leaf buds.

WOOD: Heavy, hard, strong, coarse-grained, tough, light brown, wide paler sapwood

USES: Landscaping, pulp, lumber. Historical uses: barrels, baskets, chairs, crates, twine, wheel hubs.

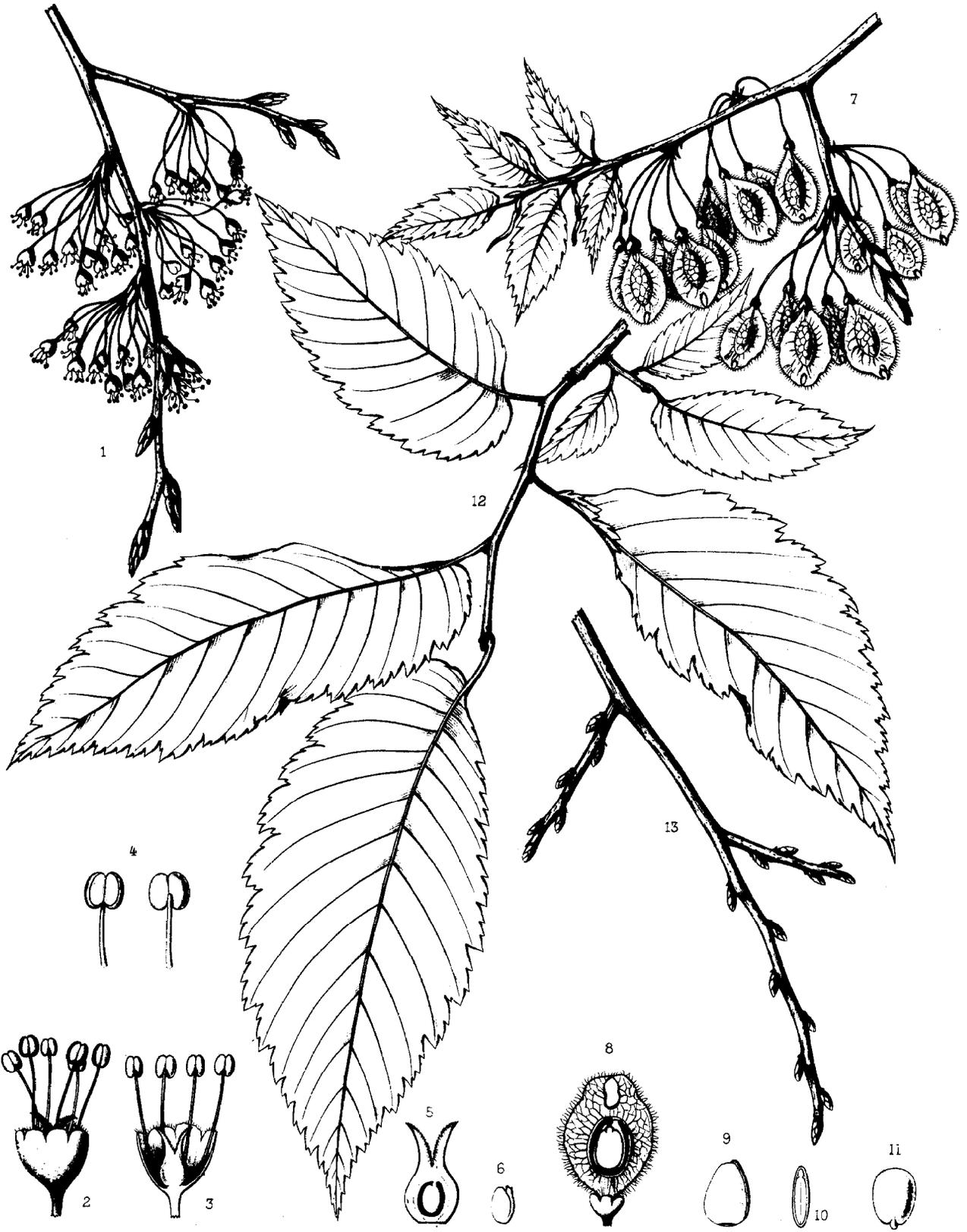
HABITAT: Prefers moist, rich alluvial soils along stream courses, fertile upland soils.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Wing of fruit ciliate, deeply notched at apex; bud scales glabrous; leaves coarsely doubly serrate on the margin; bark ashy-gray, divided by deep fissures.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Distributed over the entire state, most common northward.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch | 8. Vertical section of a fruit |
| 2. A flower | 9. A seed |
| 3. Vertical section of a flower | 10. Vertical section of a seed |
| 4. A stamen, front and rear views | 11. An embryo |
| 5. Vertical section of a pistil | 12. A summer branch |
| 6. An ovule | 13. A winter branch |
| 7. A fruiting branch | |



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