

AMERICAN HORNBEAN

Carpinus caroliniana Walt.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Bluebeech, Water beech, Ironwood, Hornbean

FORM: Usually 10-30 feet tall, diameter 8-12 inches, may reach a height of 40 feet with diameter of 2 feet; crown round-topped, wide spreading, consisting of long wiry ascending branches often pendulous at the tips.

BARK: Vertically corrugated, smooth, thin, close fitting, bluish-gray tinged with brown.

TWIGS: At first silky, hairy and green, becoming smooth, reddish to orange.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oval-oblong, doubly toothed on the margin, rounded or wedge-shaped at the base, 2-4 inches long, 1-1 3/4 inch wide, deep green above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Appear with the leaves, monoecious; staminate begin to develop in the fall and remain over winter as buds larger than the leaf buds, when fully developed they are drooping aments about 1 1/2 inch long; pistillate are in aments about 2/3 inch long with bright red styles.

FRUIT: A long pendulous cluster of 3-lobed leaf-like bodies, each bearing adaxilly a rough, light brown nutlet.

WINTER BUDS: Alternate, axillary, oval, pointed, 1/8 inch long, reddish-brown, covered with 8-12 scales; terminal bud absent.

WOOD: Rays conspicuous, heavy, hard, strong, light brown with broad sapwood

USES: Tool handles, fuel.

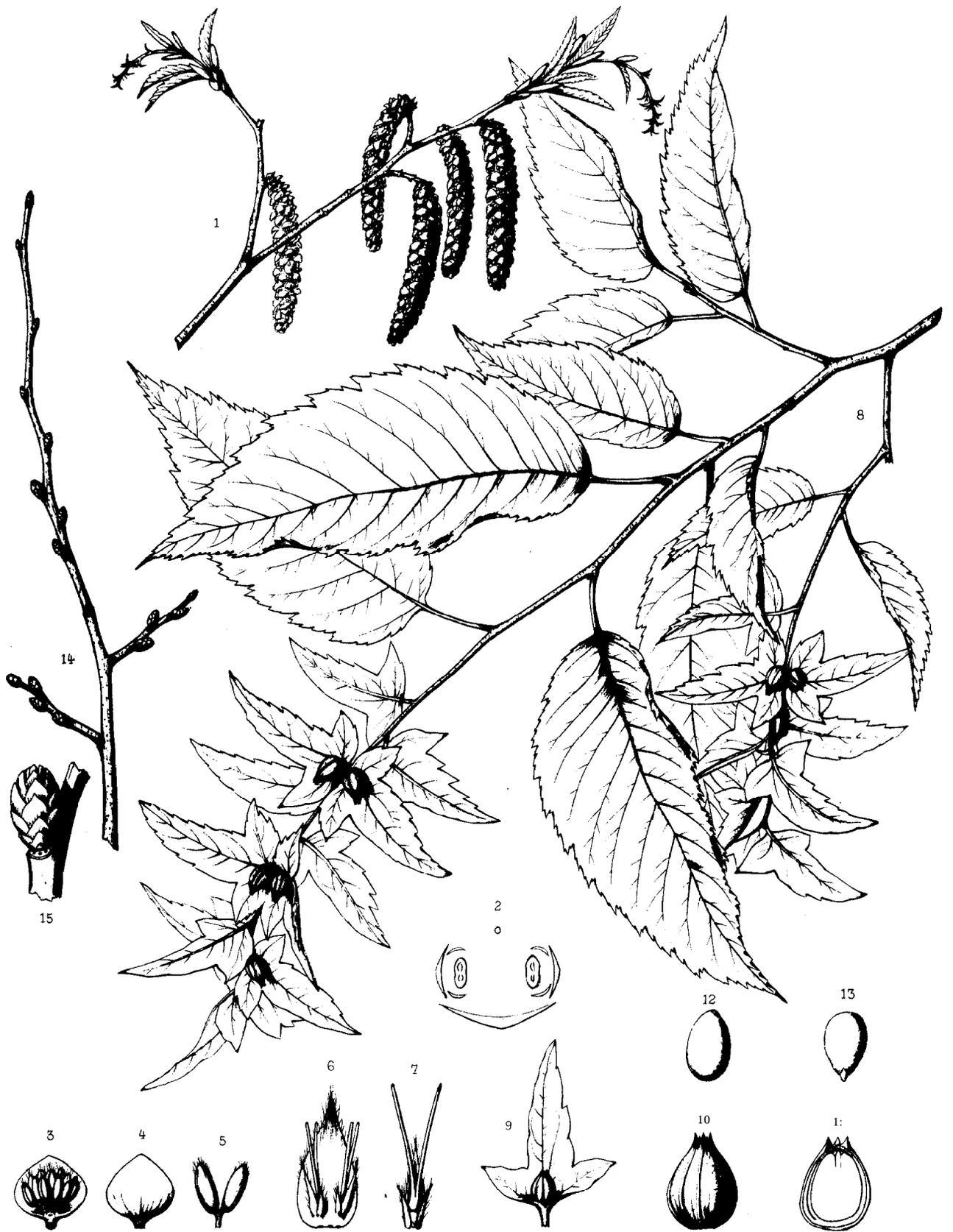
HABITAT: In swamps, on the border of streams.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Vertical, corrugated, bluish-gray bark; clusters of 3-lobed leaf-like bodies each with a rough nut; buds usually downy at the apex.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Pretty well over the state with the exception of the southern tier of counties.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch | 8. A fruiting branch |
| 2. Diagram of a pistillate flower cluster | 9. A nut |
| 3. A staminate flower with its scales, front view | 10. A nut |
| 4. Scale of a staminate ament, A stamen | 11. Vertical section of nut |
| 6. Pistillate flowers with their scales, front view | 12. A seed |
| 7. A pistillate flower with bract and bractlets | 13. An embryo |
| | 14. A winter branch |
| | 15. A staminate ament in winter |



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