

European Hornbeam

Carpinus betulus

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Summary:

Foliage: About 3 inch long pleated oblong leaves; deciduous

Height: About 50 feet

Spread: About 30 feet

Shape: Oval to oval rounded

Main features: European hornbeam is a very attractive medium to large tree species. It has handsome pleated foliage and compact and symmetrical branching pattern, the latter two attributes confer a formal appearance. The cultivar 'Fastigiata' is the most common cultivar in the trade although there are a few clones in the nursery trade being sold with the 'Fastigiata' name. Regardless of the identity issue, 'Fastigiata' is fastigiate (narrow upright) in youth but is quite wide when mature (thus rendering its cultivar name a misnomer). This species is quite drought and urban tolerant. It is very tolerant of pruning and can be pruned to form a hedge (short or tall). There are several cultivars but these are generally available by placing a special request at your local garden center or through mail order nurseries.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 5 to 7

Light: Full sun to part shade

Moisture: Average to dry

Soil type: Most soils except those that are not well-drained

pH range: Acid to alkaline

Functions:

Where space allows, European hornbeam can serve as a specimen plant, in mass, and as a border. When pruned, it can be used as a short or tall hedge or barrier planting.

Care:

No special care is needed for this species.

Additional Information:

A few of the notable cultivars are:

'Columnaris' likely there is more than one clone with this name due to varying cultivar descriptions

'Cornerstone' with a globe-shaped habit

'Emerald Avenue'™ a new introduction in 2011 by J. Frank Schmidt & Sons Nursery; dense form with deep green foliage and good heat tolerance

'Frans Fontaine' similar to 'Fastigiata'