

## The Box elder (*Acer negundo*)



**ORIGIN:** North America

**INTRODUCED TO EUROPE:** 1688

**MAIN CHARACTERISTICS:** A deciduous, medium-sized tree that usually grows upright. In the shade of other trees, it sometimes bends or trails. The box elder grows up to 20 m high with grey or light brown bark that is smooth in youth and begins to crack with age. Its leaves are opposite, pinnately compound with 3 to 5 (sometimes 7) widely lanceolate to ovate leaflets with a short petiole. The terminal leaflet is often three-lobed. Leaflets are light green above and paler below. The flowers are yellow-green with long stalks and grow in hanging clusters, as do the fruits in the form of paired V-shaped samaras.

**ECOLOGY/HABITAT:** Optimal growth conditions exist on moist, sandy, well-permeable alluvial soils. The box elder tolerates low winter temperatures, though wind and snow are unsuitable. It can have a competitive advantage over native species thanks to its high shade tolerance and high growth in full light. It is also able to outcompete native vegetation by forming dense populations and via allelopathic effects. Water availability is supposedly the most determining factor for its survival.

**STATUS:** The Box elder is widespread in Central Europe. It can be assumed that it already fills its potential range in Europe. However, in areas where it is not common today, further increases in the number of sites can be expected.

**SIMILAR TREES:** *Acer cissifolium*, *Acer maximowiczianum*