

# Discover the Flora of Our Campus

## Box elder(*Acer negundo*.)

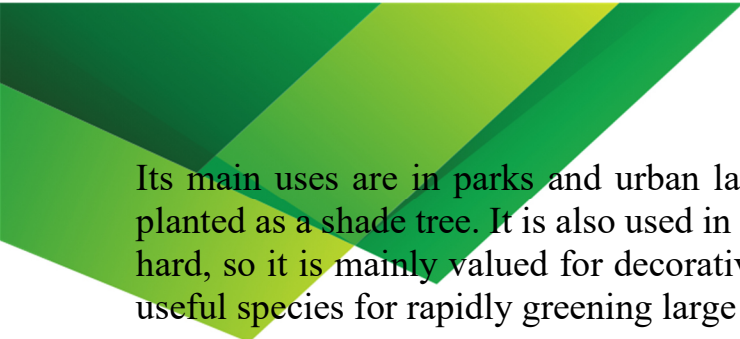
*Acer negundo*, commonly known as “box elder” or “ash-leaved maple,” is a fast-growing deciduous tree that forms a broad crown. Its leaves differ from typical maples in that they are compound, usually consisting of 3–7 small leaflets. These leaflets are green with softly serrated edges. In autumn, the leaves turn yellow before falling. The trunk is relatively soft with grayish-brown bark, and the tree develops a wide, irregular crown.

This plant is native to North America. In nature, it is widely distributed along riverbanks, moist lowlands, and forest edges. Due to its rapid growth, it can spread easily in some regions. Today, it is planted in many parts of Europe and Asia for parks and landscaping purposes. In Azerbaijan, it can also be found in some urban greening projects.



*Acer negundo* grows well in both sunny and partially shaded areas. It is not very demanding in terms of soil and can adapt to various conditions. It grows faster in moist soils but also shows some drought tolerance. It is one of the cold-hardy trees and can adapt to different climate zones. Because of its rapid growth, it is valued as a quick shade-providing tree.

In terms of human and ecological impact, box elder mainly provides shade and greenery. Its fast growth allows it to quickly create green cover in urban environments. Its flowers can serve as an early spring nectar source for bees. However, in some regions it may show invasive behavior due to its rapid spread. In ecosystems, it provides habitat for birds and insects.



Its main uses are in parks and urban landscaping. Because it grows quickly, it is planted as a shade tree. It is also used in windbreak green belts. Its wood is not very hard, so it is mainly valued for decorative and ecological purposes. It is one of the useful species for rapidly greening large areas.

Interestingly, *Acer negundo* is the only widely distributed maple species with a compound leaf structure, unlike other maples. Because it grows very quickly, it can sometimes compete with other plants in natural environments. For this reason, its spread is controlled in some countries. Nevertheless, it is considered one of the fastest species for creating green mass.

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