GENERAL DISTRIBUTION :

The typical variety of American elm (var. americana) is found throughout

eastern North America [5]. Its range extends from southern Newfoundland

westward through southern Quebec and Ontario, northwest through Manitoba

into eastern Saskatchewan, then south on the upper floodplains and

protected slopes of the Dakotas. It is found in the canyons and

floodplains of northern and eastern Kansas and in eastern Oklahoma and

central Texas. American elm is common along the Gulf Coast and east

into central Florida [9,7,29,43].

WOOD PRODUCTS VALUE :

The wood of American elm is coarse-grained, heavy, and strong. It lacks

durability, warps, and splits badly in seasoning [44]. The wood is

used in the manufacture of boxes, baskets, crates, barrels, furniture,

agricultural implements, and caskets. Elm veneer is used for furniture

and decorative panels [9,51]. American elm is also used for fuel wood

[13].

IMPORTANCE TO LIVESTOCK AND WILDLIFE :

Although American elm is not considered a preferred browse, deer,

rabbits, and hares will occasionally browse the leaves and twigs

[24,49]. The seeds are eaten by a number of small birds. The

flowerbud, flower, and fruit are eaten by mice, squirrels, oppossum,

ruffed grouse, northern bobwhite, and Hungarian partridge [5].

GENERAL BOTANICAL CHARACTERISTICS :

American elm is a deciduous, fast-growing, long-lived tree which may

reach 175 to 200 years old with some as old as 300 years [5,27,53]. In

dense forest stands, American elm may reach 100 to 200 feet (30-36 m) in

height and 48 to 60 inches (122-152 cm) in d.b.h. Heights of 80 feet

(24 m) are common on medium sites but on very wet or very dry soils, the

species is often 40 to 60 feet (12-18 m) tall at maturity [5,44,54]. In

the forest American elm often develops a clear bole 50 to 60 feet (15-18

m) in length. Open-grown trees fork 10 to 20 feet (3-6 m) from the

ground with several erect limbs forming a wide, arching crown [29,56].

The alternate, double-toothed leaves are 2 to 5 inches (5-10 cm) long

and 1 to 3 inches (2.5-7.5 cm) wide. The dark gray bark is deeply

furrowed (9,15). The perfect flowers are borne in dense clusters of

three or four fascicles. The fruit is a samara consisting of a

compressed nutlet surrounded by a membranous wing [7,29].

The root system of American elm varies according to soil moisture and

texture. In heavy, wet soils the root system is widespreading, with

most of the roots within 3 to 4 feet (1.0 - 1.2 m) of the surface. On

drier soils, American elm develops a deep taproot [29].