



Common Name: SEPTEMBER ELM

Scientific Name: *Ulmus serotina* Sargent

Other Commonly Used Names: red elm

Previously Used Scientific Names: none

Family: Ulmaceae (elm)

Rarity Ranks: G4/S1

State Legal Status: Special Concern

Federal Legal Status: none

Federal Wetland Status: UPL

Description: Tree up to 70 feet (21 meters) tall and 24 inches (60 cm) in diameter. **Bark** gray to reddish-brown, with flat, narrow, scaly ridges. Older **branches** often with irregular corky wings and scattered, white patches (lenticels). **Leaf buds** about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch (0.8 cm) long, pointed, brown, hairless. **Leaves** 3 - 4 inches (7 - 10 cm) long, oval with a pointed tip; alternate, deciduous; the sides of the leaf are unequal and offset at the base; margins double-toothed; upper surface hairless, lower surface covered with soft, yellow hair with tufts of hair in the angles of

midvein and side veins. **Flowers** tiny, green, in drooping clusters. **Fruit** about ½ inch (1.3 cm) long, light brown, very hairy, flattened, with narrow wings.

Similar Species: American elm (*Ulmus americana*) lacks the winged twigs, and its leaves are usually longer than 4 inches (10 cm). Winged elm (*U. alata*) has winged twigs but its leaves are usually less than 2 inches (5 cm) long. Slippery elm (*U. rubra*) leaves are rough-hairy on the upper surface, and its twigs lack wings. These elms flower and fruit in the spring. The only other fall-flowering elm, cedar elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*), does not occur in Georgia.

Related Rare Species: None in Georgia.

Habitat: Rocky, hardwood forests with calcium-rich soils on bluffs or streamsides.

Life History: September elm flowers late August–October and fruits ripen late October–November. Most elms produce heavy seed crops every 2 - 3 years but it is not known if September elm follows this pattern. The seeds overwinter at the soil surface and germinate the following spring. September elm is shade tolerant and will persist as an understory tree until a gap forms in the overlying canopy, when it grows rapidly into a large tree. September elm will sprout if the stem is damaged but otherwise is not known to reproduce vegetatively. Seeds of September elm are eaten by a variety of mammals and birds, and the twigs are browsed by deer.

Survey Recommendations: Surveys may be conducted throughout the growing season.

Range: Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Illinois.

Threats: Logging, clearing, and conversion of habitat to development; cattle grazing and trampling. September elm is reported to be susceptible to Dutch elm disease.

Georgia Conservation Status: Two populations are known, one on a private preserve, the other on state conservation land.

Conservation and Management Recommendations: Protect bluffs and streamside forests from clearcutting, development, and cattle grazing and trampling.

Selected References:

Chafin, L.G. 2007. Field guide to the rare plants of Georgia. State Botanical Garden of Georgia and University of Georgia Press, Athens.

Duncan, W.H. and M.B. Duncan. 1988. Trees of the southeastern United States. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

FNA. 1997. Flora of North America, Vol. 3, Magnoliophyta: Magnoliidae and Hamamelidae. Oxford University Press, New York.

Kirkman, L.K., C.L. Brown, and D.J. Leopold. 2007. Native trees of the southeast. Timber Press, Portland, Oregon.

Lance, R. 2004. Woody plants of the southeastern United States: a winter guide. University of Georgia Press, Athens.

NatureServe. 2008. NatureServe Explorer. Arlington, Virginia.
<http://www.natureserve.org/explorer>

Weakley, A.S. 2008. Flora of the Carolinas, Virginia, Georgia, northern Florida, and surrounding areas. University of North Carolina Herbarium, Chapel Hill.
<http://www.herbarium.unc.edu/flora.htm>

Author of Species Account: Linda G. Chafin

Date Compiled or Updated:

L.Chafin, Jan. 2009: original account

D.Weiler, Jan. 2010: added pictures



©Steven J. Baskauf



©Steven J. Baskauf



©Steven J. Baskauf

SEPTEMBER ELM
Ulmus serotina

