

## **American Hornbeam Tree**

To help residents recognize and appreciate our various trees in Ludington and assist in selecting trees for your property, the Ludington Tree Advisory Board will periodically publish articles describing different types of trees. These descriptions also are available on the City of Ludington's website under Tree Advisory Board. A Preferred Tree List for Ludington is available on the website as well summarizing characteristics of trees appropriate for our area.

### **American Hornbeam Tree**

These trees are appropriate for planting in parkways along a street, in parks and in residential areas. They grow well in various conditions ranging from full sun to areas with full shade, and often appear as understory trees, i.e., those planted under larger trees. American Hornbeams grow denser when grown in full sun, but still provide a good amount of shade when grown in the shade. They are moderately tolerant of drought, heat tolerant, and often described as of low maintenance because they have no serious problems with insects or diseases.

The American Hornbeam is a small- to medium-sized tree ranging from 20 to 30 feet high and 20 to 30 feet wide, and has a slow rate of growth. See photo below. There are several varieties of this tree. The Hornbeam provides a nice array of color throughout the season with reddish-purple new leaves in spring that change to dark green, and then to a lovely yellow, orange, or red in the autumn. Its leaves are about 2.5 to 5 inches long, serrated, and have pointed tips. See photo below. An insignificant "flower" appears in April. The wood is extremely hard and once was used to make bowls, other dishes, and tool handles. The trunk and branches have ridges which look like muscles and thus, the wood is sometimes termed muscle wood or iron wood. Another positive feature of this tree is that it attracts song birds.

This past spring the Department of Public Works planted several American Hornbeams in parkways around Ludington and they will be planting more this spring. If you would like to see some of these new trees, one is in the parkway at 321 N. Rowe and another at 702 N. Harrison.

The Ludington Tree Advisory Board



