

Fraxinus pennsylvanica

[Synonyms : *Calycomelia pennsylvanica*, *Fraxinus campestris*, *Fraxinus darlingtonii*, *Fraxinus lanceolata*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *austinii*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *integerrima*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *lanceolata*, *Fraxinus pennsylvanica* var. *subintegerrima*, *Fraxinus pubescens*, *Fraxinus smallii*, *Fraxinus viridis*, *Fraxinus viridis* subsp. *lanceolata*]

RED ASH is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern North America it has tiny greenish flowers and leaves which sometimes turn yellow to purple in Autumn.

It is also known as American ash, American red ash, Bastard ash, Black ash, Blue ash, Brown ash, Canadian ash, Canadian red ash, Darlington ash, Gray ash, Green ash, *Jasan pensylvánský* (Czech), *Kiditako* (Pawnee North American Indian), Marsh red ash, *Pennsylvanische Esche* (German), Piss ash, *Psehti* (Dakota North American Indian), Pumpkin ash, *Rak* (Winnebago North American Indian), Rim ash, River ash, *Rödask* (Swedish), Soft ash, Swamp ash, *Tashnanga-hi* (Omaha and Ponca North American Indian), Water ash, and White ash.

Pennsylvanica means ‘of or from Pennsylvania (United States)’.

Records mention that some of the North American Chippewa tribe scraped down the fluffy cambium layer which lies next to the wood and cooked it for food – and it is said that this tastes like eggs.

As with the ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) in Europe mystical powers were attributed to the red ash in North America by many North American Indian tribes. The tree also played a role in ritual in the Omaha tribe, and it was one of the woods in the sacred pole for Ponca Indians, some of the Dakota tribe and the Omaha Indians.

The hard and strong wood was used by the Pawnee, Ponca, Dakota, Cheyenne, Omaha and Winnebago North American Indians for making bows and arrow shafts, and they all used it for making pipe-stems as well. The Potawatomi fashioned spoons out of it, it was made into racks for drying meat by the Cheyenne and the Cherokee carved it into butter paddles. For the Havasupai tribe the wood was material for the hoops they used in their hoop and pole game. It was used by the Potawatomi and some of the Chippewa for basketry, the latter also employed it for their sledges and snowshoe frames, and they and the Havasupai made cradle-boards from it. The heavy wood provided fencing and tool handle material for the Havasupai, the Cheyenne used it for making pegs and tent poles, and both of them and the Cherokee Indians used the wood for general construction. Then apart from the foregoing this wood meant fuel for the Cherokee and Havasupai Indian tribes.

As a medicine records indicate it probably had little value among North American Indian tribes, although some of the Algonkin prescribed it for depression and some of the Chippewa Indians took it as a tonic.

Red ash is believed to have been identified first in the late 18th Century.

Its light brown wood was sought after for making carriages, and it has also been used for building interiors, furniture, oars and agricultural implements.

Medicinally, the bark has been prescribed by herbalists as a bitter tonic.