

Ptelea trifoliata

[Synonyms : *Amyris elemifolia*, *Ptelea isophylla*, *Ptelea viticifolia*]

WAFER ASH is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to eastern North America it has small fragrant, greenish-yellow flowers.

It is also known as Ague bark, *Amerika kara ag* (Turkish), *Amerikanischer Hopfenstrauch* (German), Common hop tree, Dwarf ash, Eastern hop tree, Hop bush, *Hopfenstrauch* (German), Hop tree, *Křídlatec trojlistý* (Slovak), *Křídlatec trojlistý* (Czech), *Lederblume* (German), *Lederstrauch* (German), *Odi Samaria* (German), *Olmo a trefoglie* (Italian), *Orme à trois feuilles* (French), *Orme de Samarie* (French), Pickaway anise, Pistol cap, Pole cat, Potato chip, Prairie grub, *Ptelea* (Italian), *Ptélée* (French), Quinine tree, Rattlesnake tree, Scubby trefoil, Shrubby trefoil, Skunk bush, Song tree, Stinking ash, Stinking prairie bush, Swamp dogwood, Three-leaved hop tree, Trefoil, and Wingseed.

Trifoliata is made up of Latin *tri-* (three) and *-folia* (leaved) components meaning ‘with three leaves’.

Wafer ash was highly prized by the North American Menominee Indian tribe at least as both a seasoning for food and an agent that enhanced the potency of medicines. (Even in the 1920s a 3-4 in. piece of white root bark could change hands for a pony or a couple of blankets.) This latter quality was also appreciated by the Meskwaki tribe – and they included a root infusion in a medicine used for some lung problems.

In North America the fruit have been used as a substitute for hops (*Humulus lupulus*) for brewing beer.

Wafer ash was introduced to Britain in 1714.

Medicinally, the bark has been used to treat fever, indigestion and chronic rheumatism and also as a tonic to encourage appetite. Today wafer ash is used in homoeopathic treatments.