

WHITE ASH

Fraxinus americana L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Biltmore ash, Biltmore white ash, Smallseed white ash.

FORM: Usual height 70-80 feet, diameter 2-3 feet, may attain a height of 120 feet, diameter 5-6 feet; when grown in the forest, trunk tall, usually clear of branches quite a distance from the ground, bearing a somewhat pyramidal crown; when in the open, the crown is round-topped, and may extend almost to the ground.

BARK: Grayish-brown or tinged with red, rather thick on older trunks, 1-3 inches thick, deeply furrowed by narrow fissures into broad flattened ridges, separating on the surface into thin appressed scales.

TWIGS Opposite, at first dark green or brown tinged with red, covered with pale caducous hairs, soon become orange-colored, ashy-gray, gray or light brown the first winter.

LEAVES: Opposite, about 10 inches long, compound with 5-7, sometimes 9 leaflets that are 3-5 inches long, about 1 1/2 inches broad, slightly serrate on the margin, acute at apex, wedge-shaped to rounded at the base, usually smooth and dark green above, pale below.

FLOWERS: Appear before the leaves; the staminate and pistillate on different trees; staminate in dense purplish-red clusters; pistillate in rather open panicles, corolla lacking.

FRUIT: A samara, borne in dense drooping clusters, 6-8 inches long; individual samara 1-2 inches long, consists of a seed-bearing portion and a winged portion, lanceolate or oblanceolate, the wing pointed or emarginate at apex, terminal or slightly decurrent on the seed.

WINTER BUDS: Opposite, ovate, blunt-pointed, dark brown to almost black; terminal bud larger than the lateral buds, with 2-3 pairs of scales opposite of each other and may be sharp-pointed, usually 2 lateral buds at the base of the terminal bud, resulting in a terminal enlargement of the twig.

WOOD: Hard, very strong, tough, elastic, white to brown in color, with thick lighter colored

USES: Pulp, lumber, tool handles, baseball bats, furniture, flooring. Historical uses: barrel staves, boats.

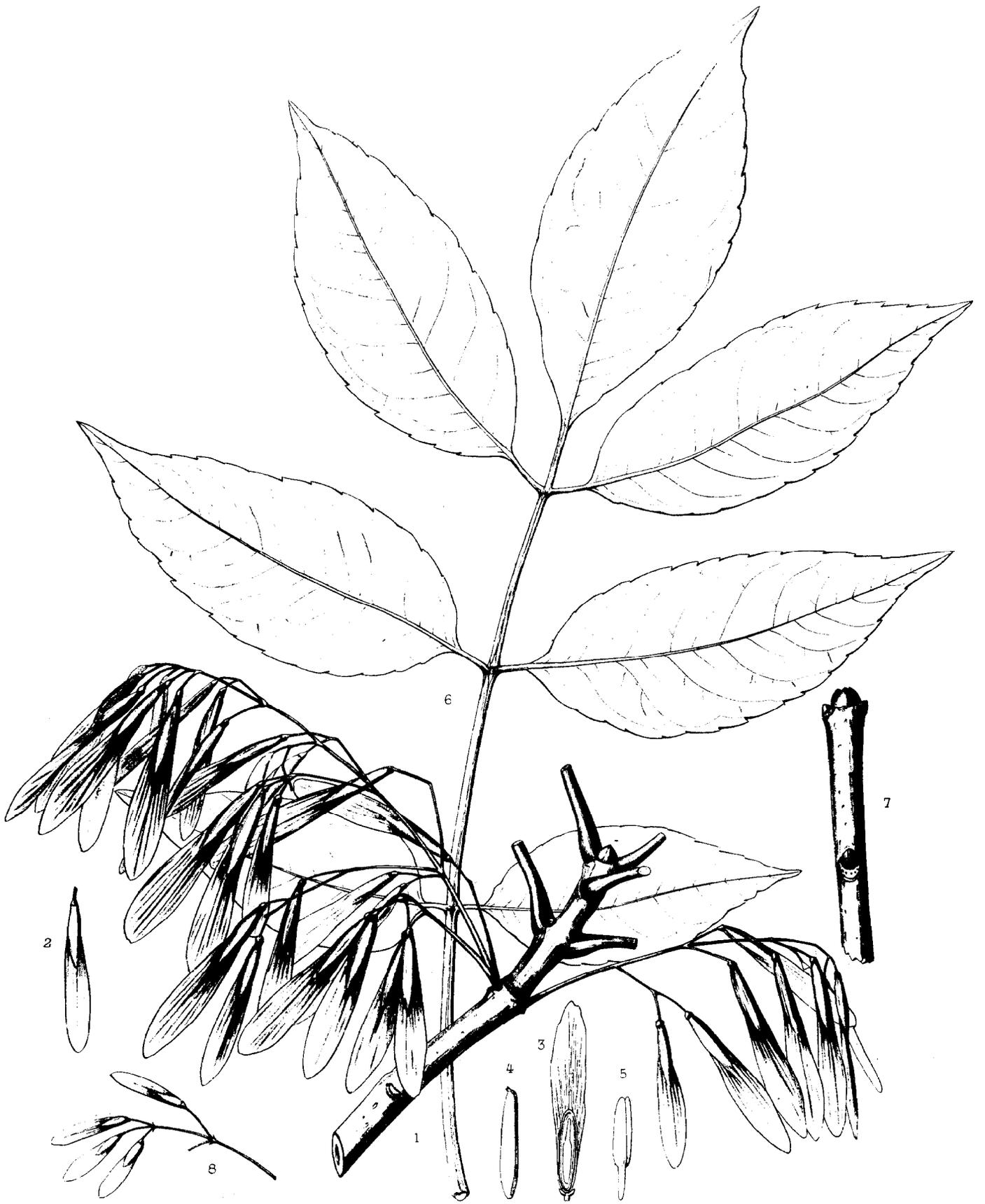
HABITAT: Fertile moist soils, common in rich moist woods along streams; occasionally on dry hillsides.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves and twigs smooth or nearly so; leaflets ovate to lanceolate, usually 5-7, abruptly pointed or acuminate, stalked; wing slightly decurrent on the seed.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Widely distributed in the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A fruiting branch | 5. An embryo |
| 2. A fruit | 6. A winter branchlet |
| 3. Vertical section of a fruit | 7. A winter branchlet |
| 4. A seed | 8. A cluster of fruit of the variety <i>microcarpa</i> |



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