



FRAXINUS EXCELSIOR

Fam. Oleaceae

DESCRIPTION

Very long-lived tree that can grow taller than 40 metres. It has an expanded, rounded and densely-branched crown with light-green foliage.

HABITAT

Deciduous tree widespread in all temperate and subtropical areas of the northern hemisphere, from Asia to Europe.

DISTRIBUTION

Ornamental tree widely used in public parks and in urban areas to create shady avenues. In Italy, it grows spontaneously in almost all regions in cool and humid woods.

FLOWERS

Monoecious species. The flowers, not very showy, have no petals. The male flowers are orbicular and blackish while the female ones are more elongated and purplish.

LEAVES

Large, deciduous, compound imparipinnate leaves formed by 5-7 pairs of sessile opposite and densely serrated leaflets, dark-green and shiny on the upper side and lighter-coloured on the lower one; in autumn, before falling off, they turn pale yellow.

FRUITS

Samaras arranged in hanging clusters that persist on the tree even in winter and are gradually dispersed by the wind.

BARK

Smooth and olive-green bark in young specimens which turns grey-brownish in mature and old trees with several longitudinal cracks.

INTERESTING FACTS

The ash also possesses officinal properties widely used in herbal and traditional medicine for which the dry leaves, the bark and the seeds are employed. In traditional medicine, the infusion of ash leaves is recommended as a mild diuretic and to soothe pain caused by rheumatism and gout. Furthermore, its emollient properties make it particularly useful in the cosmetic industry as an excellent remedy to soothe the skin and to reduce wrinkles.

ROOTS

Taproots with many elongated superficial roots.

