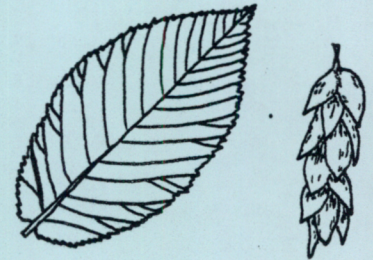


SOME TREES OF AN UNCOMMON NATURE

by Dan McAskill, Donagh

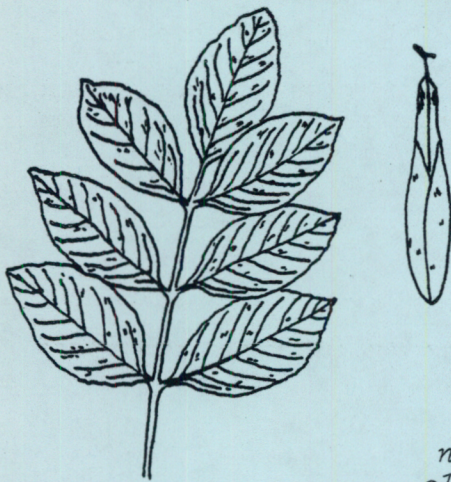
The concept of tree rarity is difficult to put in perspective but a few facts may help you to understand it. Trees occupy 682,000 acres of Prince Edward Island's land surface (48.1%) and number in excess of 2.5 billion stems. If rarity were defined in terms of a percentage of the total population it would be a relatively simple though time consuming process to arrive at an estimate of the percentage present. However, the concept of rarity should include such factors as local abundance, site preference and growth habits, site availability, and variable breeding levels. I have selected the following "native" trees as uncommon based on my field experience, readings, and conversations with other naturalists. For any species I have termed as "rare" I would appreciate information on new locations for these species on Prince Edward Island.

Eastern hop hornbeam or ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*) is a very rare tree on P.E.I. It has been identified at Haliburton (in West Prince), Blooming Point, Cavendish, and is believed to still exist at Lewes. It is normally found in the shade of other hardwoods. Distinctive features of this tree include a bark surface that forms small "H" like designs and a reproductive structure similar to a cluster of hops.



White ash (*Fraxinus americana*) and black ash (*F. nigra*) are uncommon in

Prince County and rare in Queens and Kings Counties. The stout, opposite budded, upward reaching branches and "S" furrowed bark (sometimes scaly in black ash) help to distinguish the ashes from other deciduous trees in winter and the large, opposite compound leaves distinguish the trees in summer. The black ash is normally found in wooded wetlands, has leaflets without stalks, and has a terminal (end)



bud separated from the last pair of lateral (side) buds. The white ash is normally found on moist slopes, has leaflets with

stalks, and has no space between the terminal and the last pair of leaflet buds. Care should be taken when identifying these species as a number of non-native ashes appear to be present.

In some of the wetlands of Prince County, eastern white cedar (*Thuja canadensis*) is relatively common but in the woodlands of Queens

and Kings Counties cedar is rare except for plantings. It has been recorded in Brackley and in Bunbury but the latter site may be a planting. A similar situation exists for American elm (*Ulmus americana*). This tree is relatively common in wet wooded areas of Prince County but rare in Queens and Kings.

