

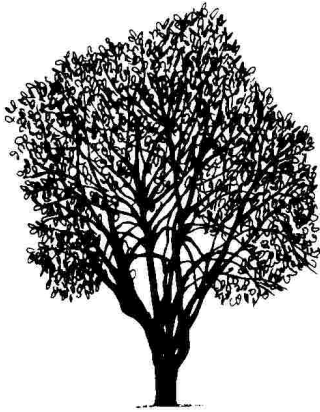
## ***Fraxinus velutina*: Velvet Ash<sup>1</sup>**

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Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### **Introduction**

This fast-growing, deciduous, native North American tree reaches a height of 30 to 50 feet, depending upon cultural conditions. It is capable of growing taller in its native habitat. The three to six-inch-long leaves are divided into multiple leaflets and turn a brilliant yellow in fall before dropping. The inconspicuous, green, springtime flowers are followed by the production of showy, persistent fruits. The tree has been widely grown in California and in parts of the west including Texas.



**Figure 1.** Middle-aged *Fraxinus velutina*: Velvet Ash

### **General Information**

**Scientific name:** *Fraxinus velutina*

**Pronunciation:** FRACK-sih-nus vell-LOO-tih-nuh

**Common name(s):** Velvet Ash, Modesto Ash, Arizona Ash

**Family:** *Oleaceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 7A through 8B (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** reclamation; urban tolerant; shade; street without sidewalk; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); highway median

**Availability:** not native to North America

### **Description**

**Height:** 30 to 50 feet

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2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Range

**Spread:** 45 to 60 feet

**Crown uniformity:** irregular

**Crown shape:** round

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** medium

#### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** odd-pinnately compound

**Leaf margin:** serrate

**Leaf shape:** lanceolate, elliptic (oval)

**Leaf venation:** pinnate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** less than 2 inches, 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

#### Flower

**Flower color:** green

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

#### Fruit

**Fruit shape:** elongated

**Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** green, tan

**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**Breakage:** susceptible to breakage

**Current year twig color:** gray

**Current year twig thickness:** medium, thick

**Wood specific gravity:** unknown

## Culture

**Light requirement:** full sun

**Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** no

**Outstanding tree:** no

**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** sensitive to pests/diseases

## Use and Management

The tree has been traditionally difficult to maintain due to the development of many upright trunks originating from the same position on the main trunk. This condition has led to the creation of weak trees which often break apart at the base of the multiple trunks. Careful pruning and branch selection is required during the first 15 years after planting to ensure good, strong trunk and branch development. It is important to purchase good quality planting stock which has a central leader and no upright multiple

trunks. This will make the tree much easier to maintain in the landscape. Some horticulturists do not recommend planting this tree due to the high pruning requirement and susceptibility to breakage.

Velvet Ash should be grown in full sun on any soil and will tolerate both alkaline and rocky soils. It is tolerant of wet soil and has been extensively used along streets in areas with poor drainage. Roots often grow close to the soil surface causing a nuisance by breaking sidewalks and curbs.

The cultivar 'Arizona' is widely planted but reportedly has the same problems as the species.

Propagation is easily done by seed.

## Pests

It is very susceptible to borers. Trees often have a short-life.

## Diseases

Texas Ash is susceptible to verticillium wilt.