

JUNEAU URBAN TREE PROFILE

European beech

Fagus sylvatica



This is an outstanding deciduous urban tree for large areas that is tolerant of poor soils and shade. The tree has simple dark green lustrous leaves that turn golden brown in the autumn and often persist into the winter. This large tree has a dense pyramidal shape and can reach fifty feet tall with a spread of thirty feet. Most interesting, especially in the winter months, is its smooth gray bark. This adaptable tree prefers rich slightly acidic soil that is well drained but will withstand most all conditions except saturated soils. This beech

is hardy to zone 4. Several cultivars exist including a purple leaved variety (*F. sylvatica* 'Atropunicea'), a columnar variety (*F. sylvatica* 'Fastigiata'), and a weeping form (*F. sylvatica* 'Pendula'). *Fagus grandifolia* is a North American native beech that has similar characteristics however it is not as adaptable to difficult conditions as the European beech. Plant the native variety when favorable conditions are present. Some of Juneau's largest European beech trees are found at 8th Street and Calhoun Avenue adjacent to the Governor's House.



Left: Autumn leaf color

Above: A grove of beech trees with smooth bark.