

American 'Copper' Beech

Fagus grandifolia

European Beech is similar to the American Beech in shape and form; however, the leaves develop into a rich russet brown to a purplish color. The 'copper' is a cultivar that gives the leaf the purplish brown color. European Copper Beech, also called purple beech, is a cultivar of European Beech and prefers moist well drained soil in full sunlight. It grows 50-60 feet high with a 40 foot crown spread. Beech is a beautiful tree year round. The bark is persistently smooth; the trunk is clean and buttressed, the roots often are exposed by erosion. The fruit is 1" wide, golden green, splits in four, ripens to brown. The nuts are 1½" long, shiny, three-sided and concave. The catkins or flowers appear in May as the leaves expand. As they shed, they leave debris on the ground. The American Beech is the same in height as the European Beech; however, its leaves are larger, with more veins, a pointed tip, and many teeth. The American Beech trunk bark is lighter in color. Its fruit husk has hooked prickles.

The Charles Baber Cemetery had one European Copper Beech. It was located midway down from the entrance on the east side of Barber Ave. inside the Donaldson family plot. When the veterans performed their 21 gun salute on Memorial Day, it is under this tree that they stood along with the school children who replaced the flags on the memorial markers. This lovely Copper Beech was not in good health and had to be cut down in 2012. This magnificent tree that framed the east side of the chapel when looking in from the entrance, is truly missed.



However, in searching several nurseries within the nearby counties, an American 'Copper' Beech was found and planted as part of the 2014 Arbor Day tree planting. To give it more room, it is planted directly across from where the old one stood on Barber Avenue along side the John Pott plot. It was quite expensive to purchase when compared to the other trees purchased and planted on Arbor Day. But whenever a single specie tree is removed, the tree committee makes all efforts to find a similar specie replacement.

