Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine

Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine'



Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 35 feet

Spread: 15 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 4b

Other Names: European Hornbeam, Common Hornbeam

Description:

A stately specimen of a tree with excellent form and few troubles; columnar habit makes it great for smaller landscapes; takes pruning very well and can make a fantastic hedge; choice cultivars are available in some very creative shapes and forms

Ornamental Features

Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine is primarily valued in the landscape for its rigidly columnar form. It has forest green deciduous foliage. The glossy pointy leaves turn an outstanding gold in the fall. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up. The smooth gray bark adds an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine is a dense deciduous tree with a narrowly upright and columnar growth habit. Its relatively fine texture sets it apart from other landscape plants with less refined foliage.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting birds and squirrels to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade
- Vertical Accent
- Mass Planting
- Hedges/Screening

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Planting & Growing

Hornbeam, Frans Fontaine will grow to be about 35 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 15 feet. It has a high canopy of foliage that sits well above the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 120 years or more; think of this as a heritage tree for future generations!

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. This plant should be periodically fertilized throughout the active growing season with a specially-formulated acidic fertilizer. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is highly tolerant of urban pollution and will even thrive in inner city environments. This is a selected variety of a species not originally from North America.

Clean up Rating (1-5) 1=least effort 5=most effort

Clean Up Rating (3): European Hornbeam get green catkins and bloom in spring. Male flowers are 1 to 1½ inches long and female flowers are 2 to 3 inches long with three-lobed bracts. Generally it doesn't produce much of the fruit that is 1/3-inch winged nutlets. Can clean up by blowing or raking flowers, nutlets and leaves onto the lawn and mow or bag.



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