**Carpinus orientalis**

**Habitat and Ecology**

This hornbeam is a thermophilous and xerophilous species, drought-resistant, thriving principally on slopes in shallow humus-poor or even rocky soils, and preferring calcareous primary oak forests in disturbed habitats, such as after the exploitation of degraded areas and to regenerate vigorously, promoting its presence in disturbed sites. Thanks to its strong suckering capacity and hard wood, it is often managed in coppiced stands for the production of quality firewood and charcoal. No significant pests or diseases are recorded for this tree.

**Distribution**

The oriental hornbeam (Carpinus orientalis Mill.) is a large shrub or small tree, 1-5 metres tall, rarely up to 15 m, with a grey irregularly ribbed stem. The leaves are ovate-eliptic with evident veins, tomentose, with serratte margins and short petioles 5-8 mm long. This tree is monoeocious with unisexual flowers blossoming in April. The male flowers are dense in short catkins 2-3 cm long, whereas the female catkins are 3-6 cm long with leaf-like un-lobed and coarsely toothed bracts that reach 12-18 mm size at maturity, and which cover the flowers and later the nuts.

**Importance and Usage**

Like other hornbeams (sometimes called ironwoods), the wood of the oriental hornbeam is very hard. Because of its small size and bushy habit, this tree does not produce high value wood. It was used more in the past for making tool handles and other small household items. It is very frugal, easily able to colonise open stands for fuel production as firewood or charcoal.

**Threats and Diseases**

As other hornbeams, the oriental hornbeam may be attacked by the gypsy moth (Lymantria dispar). It is also a susceptible host for the processionary moth (Thaumetopoea processionea).

**References**