

BORNE WEeping BEECH - *Fagus sylvatica* 'Bornyensis'



This stately beech is well placed on the peaceful trail that looks out on Heron Lake behind the Heather Garden. Borne weeping beech works beautifully as a solitary tree. You can stand under its weeping branches in winter and look out at the lake. You might see mergansers diving or gadwalls peacefully gliding in the water. If you look up, you can see the beech leaf buds are distinctive - sharply pointed and not pressed against the twigs. And in summer, its oval green leaves cast shadows on the lake.

Fagus sylvatica 'Bornyensis' is narrower than the cultivar 'Pendula', which has more spreading branches. Borne weeping beech is an a-symmetrical weeping beech with an upright growing top and pendulous branches which are usually on one side. It reaches 20 to 30 metres in height.

Borne weeping beech originated in Borney forest near Metz, France. A beech forest is very dark, the sun barely reaching the ground. Few species of plants are able to survive there. Beech root system is shallow, with large roots spreading out in all directions. European beech forms ectomycorrhizas (symbiotic relationship) with a range of fungi - *Amanita*, *Boletus*, *Cantharellus*, *Hebeloma* and *Lactarius*. These fungi are important in enhancing uptake of water and nutrients from the soil. And native truffle grows in beech forests, a treat for wildlife and humans too.

Fungal fruiting bodies, such as mushrooms, conks and coral fungi, distribute their spores by means of wind. But the fruiting bodies of truffle species are located underground and are not released into air. So rodents and other small mammals perform the role of spore dispersal. In Europe it was the wild boars that found ripe truffles, ate them and dispersed their spores. By design, truffles release fragrant gases as they ripen to attract critters to eat them. Beech is a host tree for the black summer truffle, *Tuber aestivum*, one of the best edible truffles.



black summer truffle (*Tuber aestivum*)

Sources - <http://www.bluebellnursery.com/catalogue/trees/Fagus/F/2814>; <http://www.trufflespecialty.com/en/truffles.html>; <http://www.first-nature.com/fungi/tuber-aestivum.php>; https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fagus_sylvatica