

# *Eucommia ulmoides*

## Hardy rubber tree



*Eucommia ulmoides* (Hardy rubber tree) originates in Central and Western China and was found by the English plant collector E.H. Wilson around 1895. The hardy rubber tree is a monotypic genus, meaning that there is only one species. The species naturally grows irregularly, and is more shrub-like than upright, but with the right pruning the strong grower can still reach a height of up to 18 metres with a wide, dense, oval crown that is semi-open when it gets older. Though they are not related, the *Eucommia ulmoides* species gets its name from various similarities with *Ulmus*, the elm.

The hardy rubber tree blooms green, pompom-shaped racemes in April. In the summer, it bears winged, yellow-green nuts, which look a lot like the fruits on the elm. The beautiful glossy, egg-shaped, thick and leathery leaves bud dark green, keeping their colour in summer and turning yellow in autumn. *Eucommia ulmoides* is the only rubber-producing tree on the northern hemisphere. The rubber is extracted from the leaves: if you tear the leaf, you'll see threads of white latex keeping the two halves of the leaf together.

*Eucommia ulmoides* is winter-hardy and can withstand heat, drought, wind and air pollution. Furthermore, the species is not sensitive to plagues or diseases, making it a great alternative to elms. The hardy rubber tree has few soil requirements, but prefers a sunny environment in moist but permeable soil. *Eucommia ulmoides* is a great species for parks, but particularly has a lot of potential as a tree on streets, avenues or squares for future green infrastructure projects.

### TYPES OF PLANTING

**Tree types:** standard trees, multi-stemmed trees, climate trees, shade trees, characteristic trees, solitary shrubs | **Topiary on stem:** multi-stem umbrella

### USE

**Location:** avenue, park, central reservation, roof garden, large garden, cemetery, traffic areas, industrial zones | **Pavement:** none, open | **Planting concepts:** Climate planting, Prairie planting

### CHARACTERISTICS

**Crown shape:** wide oval | **Crown structure:** dense | **Height:** 12 - 18 m | **Width:** 8 - 12 m | **Winter hardiness zone:** 4B - 7B

### ASPECTS

**Wind:** tolerant to wind | **Soil:** loess, sabulous clay, peaty, heavy clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil, all soils | **Nutrient level:** rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level:** dry, moist, wet | **Light requirements:** sun, partial shade | **pH range:** acidic, neutral, alkaline | **Extreme environments:** tolerant to dryness, tolerates air pollution, tolerates heat

### PLANTKENMERKEN

**Flowers:** raceme, pompom-shaped, discrete | **Flower colour:** green | **Flowering period:** April - May | **Leaf colour:** dark green | **Leaves:** deciduous, ovate, ovoid, thick, leathery, polished, serrate | **Autumn colour:** yellow | **Fruits:** striking, winged | **Fruit colour:** yellow-green | **Bark colour:** pale brown | **Bark:** furrowed | **Twig colour:** grey-brown | **Twigs:** with lenticels | **Root system:** deep, extensive, many hair roots

