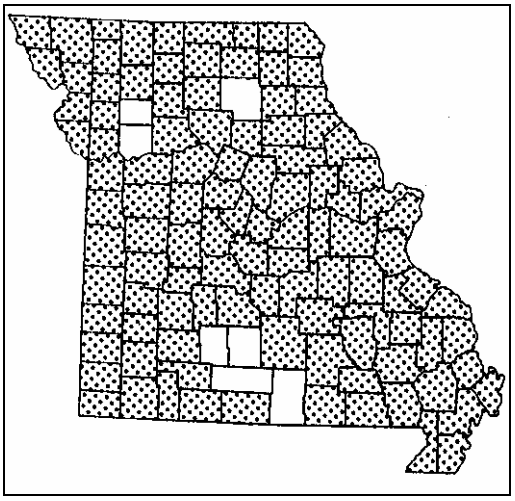
Boxelder

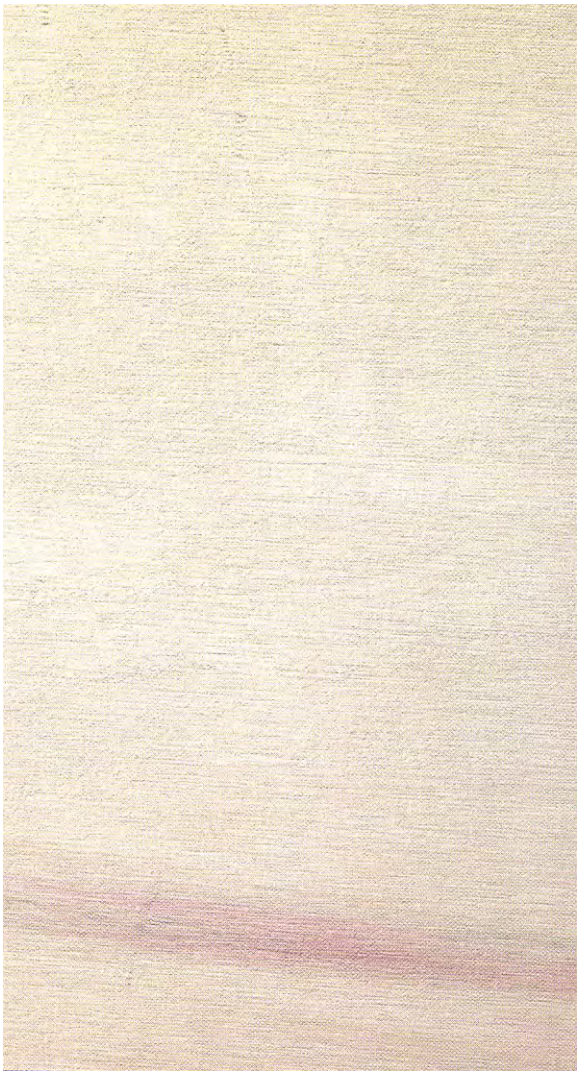
Acer negundo, L.

Sometimes called Manitoba maple or ash-leaf maple because it has a compound leaf (typical of ash), this tree actually belongs to the Acer (or maple) genus. The tree is found throughout the state along river and creek bottoms. It may occur in fairly large pure stands, though it is often associated with cottonwood, soft maple, elm, sycamore and black willow. It is a common tree in yards since it tolerates great extremes in soils and grows rapidly into an adequate shade tree.

The sapwood and heartwood are not clearly defined in boxelder. The wood is generally a creamy white to greenish-yellow or yellowish-brown color. A distinguishing characteristic in the heartwood is the presence of coral or pinkish-red streaks of a soluble pigment. The bark is thin, light brown or pale gray with narrow ridges and fissures. The wood is close-grained and diffuse porous; it is lightweight, soft and not strong. The dry wood has neither odor nor taste. It is stable when dry, machines well, but is not durable.

Boxelder is generally combined with other low grade bottomland species in the commercial market and find its way into crates, boxes, inexpensive furniture and occasionally pallets. Although not common at sawmills around the state, it makes an acceptable wood for home workshops. See also soft maple.





Massengale