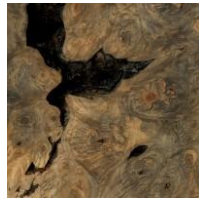


## Wood of The Month



### **Buckeye – *Aesculus glabra***

Ohio buckeye (*Aesculus glabra*) and yellow buckeye (*Aesculus octanora*) are the major species of buckeye here in Missouri. Ohio buckeye is the most common and is sometimes called “fetid” or “stinking” buckeye because of a nauseating odor of the bruised bark or fresh wood. Yellow buckeye may also be called sweet buckeye and has a much larger fruit than Ohio buckeye. These species are combined in the trade and can be utilized for the same purposes as aspen, basswood and yellow poplar. The name refers to the resemblance of the nutlike seed, which has a pale patch on a shiny red-brown surface, to the eye of a deer. The seeds contain tannic acid and both the young foliage and seeds are poisonous to cattle and humans. However, they are rendered harmless after boiling or roasting. The plant is the state tree of Ohio, and the term *buckeyes* is used to refer to Ohioans in general as well as to the sports teams and players of the Ohio State University.

The wood is diffuse-porous and is nearly white in color. The white sapwood blends gradually into a creamy white heartwood and can have grayish streaks. It is very soft in texture, close-grained, not strong, but generally straight-grained, and low in shock resistance. Buckeye is one of the softest and lightest hardwoods native to the United States. Its low strength and bland appearance limit it to basic utility purposes. It is rated low on machinability such as shaping, mortising, steam bending, boring and turning. Its low density can lead to fuzzy surfaces similar to Aspen and Cottonwood. The grain is quite plain and is seldom used in a natural finish, however, it takes paint well. The gray-stained material has a very unusual effect when used by woodworkers for turnery or carving and is often sought by wood collectors. The burl sections of buckeye are much more prized, and their light-on-dark knot clusters, and unique, almost black discolorations make them sought after for a variety of specialty and hobbyist applications. Some Ohio buckeye lumber is used in the manufacture of artificial limbs and splints because of its strength to light weight ratio. It is also used for various types of woodenware, paper pulp, boxes and cases. It is not generally commercially available in Missouri, but is a desirable wood for home workshop use within its limits.

You can read more about Buckeye at: [sweet buckeye at Wood Magazine's wood anecdotes](#) and on [The Wood Database](#).

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