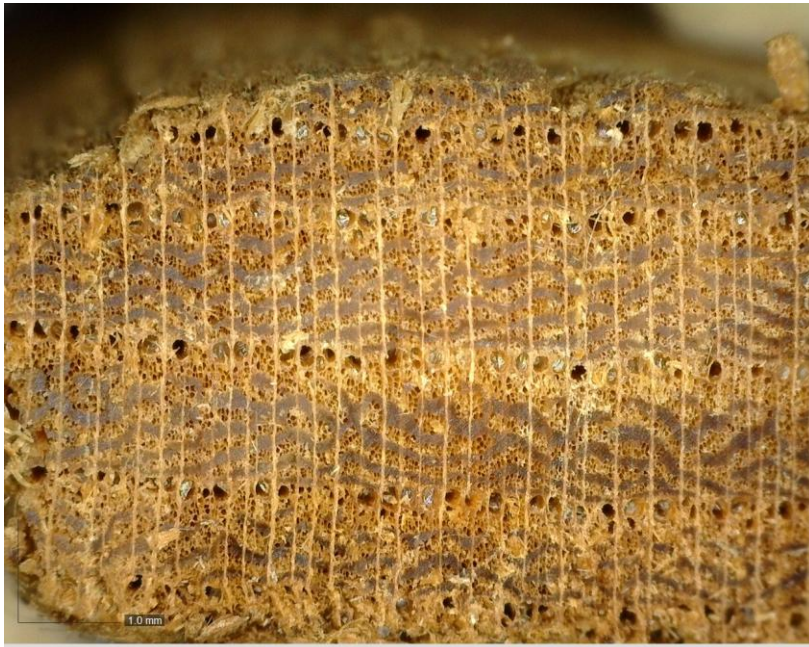


2019 January *Guess that Plant*



Umus americana L., American Elm wood cross section

The January 2020 *Guess that Plant* was a different type of monthly sample within the realm of plant identifications. Sometimes the plant materials presented may not be the growing tree or its living field characteristics. In this case it was a small piece of time worn wood. The sample was cut from a roof beam from the early 18th century Evans-Darnel house in Evesham, New Jersey. This historic home had an architectural inspection, and one of the data sets was to type the wood used to construct the home. This detective action required an inspection of the pores, growth rings and vertical rays. The sample was identified as American elm by its very particular wavy cell structure. The sample is described as a ring porous, with smaller late wood pores in wavy bands. This sample, it turns out, is quite unusual. Most woodworks descriptions of American elm describe it as a poor choice for dimensional timbers because it is prone to warping and checking. The builders of the Evans-Darnel home used local cut wood, probably from the land on which the home exists. When inspecting the roof rafters, it was determined American elm, red maple, and white oak were selected for this task. The use of the elm for the home building turns out to be the only known use of this wood in early Southern New Jersey homes, and may indicate the use of the wood that is available out of necessity, creating this wood sample mystery.

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