

shagbark hickory

Carya ovata

FEATURES

The deciduous shagbark hickory tree may grow to a height of 80 feet and a trunk diameter of three and one-half feet. Its gray bark separates into long, shredding scales giving the tree a shaggy appearance. The pinnately compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Each leaf contains five to seven ovate or lance-shaped leaflets. Each finely toothed leaflet may grow to 10 inches long and five inches wide. Leaves are yellow-green or green on the smooth upper surface and paler and smooth or somewhat hairy on the lower surface. Male and female flowers are separate but located on the same tree. The tiny flower has no petals. Male (staminate) flowers are arranged in drooping catkins while female (pistillate) flowers are in groups of two to five. The fruit is a spherical nut, about two inches across. The husk is yellow-green to red-brown, about one-half inch thick. The four-angled, white nut has meat that is sweet to the taste.

BEHAVIORS

The shagbark hickory may be found statewide in Illinois. This tree grows in rich woods and upland woods. The shagbark hickory flowers after its leaves begin to unfold, during April and May. Its heavy, hard wood is used for tool handles, as fuel, for hickory-smoked cooking and for making baseball bats. The nuts are used in cooking and as food by wildlife.

TAXONOMY

Kingdom: Plantae
Division: Magnoliophyta
Class: Magnoliopsida
Order: Juglandales
Family: Juglandaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS

common, native

ILLINOIS RANGE





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bark



canopy



leaf



nut

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands; upland deciduous forests

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none