

PECAN

Carya illinoensis (Wangenh.) K. Koch.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Pecan nut, Pecanier, Pecan-tree.

FORM: 90-100 feet high, occasionally 2 1/2-4 feet in diameter above its enlarged base, stout spreading branches forming in the forest a narrow symmetrical and inversely pyramidal head; in the open with a round-topped crown.

BARK: 1-1 1/2 inch thick, light brown tinged with red, deeply divided irregularly into narrow forked ridges broken on the surface into thick appressed scales.

TWIGS: At first slightly tinged with red and coated with loosely matted hairs; later smooth or minutely hairy, marked by orange-colored lenticels.

LEAVES: Alternate, 12-20 inches long, compound, with 9-17 leaflets that are oblong-lanceolate, more or less sickle-shaped with doubly toothed margins, unequally rounded or heart-shaped at the base, 4-8 inches long, 1-3 inches wide, smooth or somewhat hairy above, pale and smooth or finely hairy below.

FLOWERS: Staminate in slender aments, 3-5 inches long, from buds formed in the axils of the leaves of the previous year, occasionally on shoots of the year, sessile or short-stalked, light yellow-green; pistillate in few or many flowered spikes, oblong, narrowed at the ends, slightly 4-angled.

FRUIT: In clusters of 3-11, pointed at apex, rounded at the base, 1-2 1/2 inches long, 1/2-1 inch broad; husk thin, brittle, splitting to the base at maturity; nut ovoid to ellipsoidal, nearly cylindrical, pointed at the apex, rounded at the base, reddish-brown with irregular black markings, with a thin shell and papery partitions.

WINTER BUDS: Sharp-pointed, covered with clusters of bright yellow articulate hairs and pale tomentum; terminal bud 1/2 inch long; lateral buds often stalked.

WOOD: Heavy, not strong, brittle, coarse-grained, light brown, tinged with red.

USES: Gun stocks, furniture, interior woodwork, cabinet work, veneers, plaques, nuts. Historical uses: wagons, agricultural implements.

HABITAT: Low, rich ground.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Excepting the big shellbark hickory, the longest leaves of any of the hickories; nuts oval to oblong; cultivated for its valuable nuts.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Mainly central and southwestern Alabama.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A fruiting branch | 5. Cross section of a nut |
| 2. A nut | 6. A thin-shelled nut, cut transversely |
| 3. A nut | 7. A leaf |
| 4. A nut | 8. A winter branchlet |



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