

OSAGE ORANGE

Maclura pomifera (Raf .) Schneid.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Bodark, Bois-d'art, Bowwood, Hedge, Mockorange.

FORM: Height 20-40 feet with a diameter 12 inches, may reach a height of 50-60 feet, with diameter 2-3 feet, trunk usually short, stout, often covered with a dense growth of sprouts, crown round-topped, rather open, often irregular.

BARK: Mature bark 3/4 inch thick, dark gray, or dark orange-colored, longitudinally or sometimes diagonally furrowed, with prominent ridges which scale off into thin scales.

TWIGS: Stout, at first greenish, slightly pubescent, often armed with straight axillary spines and stout, lateral branchlets.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, 3-5 inches long, 2-3 inches wide, acute at apex, rounded or cordate at the base, entire, dark green and lustrous above, paler below, petioles exude a milky juice when broken.

FLOWER: Dioecious; staminate in stout globose, long-stalked racemes from axils of leaves crowded on short spurs; pistillate sessile in short-stalked, globose, many-flowered heads on shoots of the year.

FRUIT: Pale green, orange-like in appearance, 4-5 inches in diameter, composed of many small drupes closely grown together, exudes a milky juice when punctured.

WINTER BUDS: Terminal bud absent; lateral buds alternate, blunt, small, pale chestnut-brown, ciliate, immersed in the bark.

WOOD: Heavy, very hard and strong, coarse-grained, durable, bright orange on fresh section, thin pale sapwood.

USES: Fence posts, landscaping, hedges. Historical uses: bows, dyes.

HABITAT: Prefers rich bottom lands, rarely on sandy soils.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Orange-like green fruit; twigs armed with axillary spines; contains a milky juice; roots deep yellow.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Not native to Alabama; has escaped cultivation and grows wild mainly in the Black Belt.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. A fruiting branch | 6. A winter branchlet |
| 2. A nutlet | 7. Portion of winter branchlet with a spine and lateral bud |
| 3. Vertical section of a | 8. A leaf scar |
| 4. An embryo seen from the two sides | |



Maclura pomifera (Raf.) Schneid.