

# PIGNUT HICKORY

## *Carya glabra* (Mill.) Sweet

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Bitternut, Black hickory, Brown hickory, Red hickory.

FORM: Commonly a height of 80-90 feet, diameter 2-3 feet, occasionally 120 feet tall; trunk slender, slightly tapering, often clean and long; crown oblong, rather narrow, with short, spreading branches, lower somewhat pendulous.

BARK: Close, dark gray, shallow-fissured, narrowly ridged, 1/2-3/4 inch thick; rarely peels off.

TWIGS: Rather slender, usually smooth, yellowish-green, later brown.

LEAVES: Alternate, compound, 8-12 inches long, with 5-7 leaflets that are oblong to obovate-lanceolate, sharply pointed at the apex, finely toothed on the margin, tapering or obliquely rounded at the base, thick, smooth, dark green above, paler below.

FLOWERS: Appear when leaves about half developed, monoecious; staminate in aments 3-5 inches long in clusters of three on a common stalk; pistillate in 2-5 flowered spikes on the new growth.

FRUIT: Variable in shape and size, pear-shaped, globular, or obovoid, 1-3 inches long, tapering at the base, reddish-brown; nut oblong to oval, with thick bony shell; kernel at first sweet, later bitter.

WINTER BUDS: More than 2 ranked, reddish-brown to gray, blunt-pointed; terminal bud 1/4-1/2 inch long; outer bud scales reddish-brown to gray; inner scales of buds pale silky.

WOOD: Heavy, hard, very strong, tough, elastic, close-grained, a valuable grade of hickory timber.

USES: Tool handles, rough lumber, railroad ties, fuel, barbeque smoke. Historical uses: wheel spokes.

HABITAT: An upland species, prefers dry ridges and hillsides.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Smooth and rather slender twigs; buds are oval, reddish-brown and smaller than other native hickories; pear-shaped to ovoid fruit; nut with thick bony shell.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Madison, Cherokee, Blount, St.Clair, Jefferson, Tuscaloosa, DeKalb, Bibb, Hale, Pike, and Babour Counties.

### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- |                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. A fruiting branch | 4. Vertical Section of a nut |
| 2. A nut             | 5. Cross section of a nut    |
| 3. A nut             |                              |



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