




Carya ovata

Shagbark Hickory

Tried and True
Native Plant Selections
for the Mid-Atlantic

This slow-growing, but long-lived, large tree is indigenous* to river banks and flood plains and makes an attractive ornamental specimen for large landscapes with its good fall color and distinctive exfoliating bark. It also provides excellent support to a variety of wildlife.



Tree	Tree with Fall Foliage, Leaflets, and Fruit
Height: 60–80 feet	  
Spread: 30–50 feet	
Bloom Color: Yellow-green	
Characteristics	
Large, long-lived, deciduous tree with irregular, rounded crown, straight trunk, and deep taproot	
Alternate , pinnately compound leaves, usually with 5 serrate, lanceolate leaflets , green above, paler below; yellow to golden brown fall color	
Non-showy yellow-green catkins April to May	
Nuts with husks that split into four valves in fall	
Bark exfoliates in long strips on older trees	
Attributes	
Tolerates occasional drought and flooding	
No serious pests or diseases	
Deer rarely severely damage	
Nuts edible; wood used for curing/smoking, firewood, and making furniture and tools	
Nuts eaten by birds and mammals; nesting site and cover for songbirds and migrant birds; larval host for Banded & Hickory Hairstreaks and moths	
Growing and Maintenance Tips	Excellent Replacement for
Soil Requirements: Rich, well-drained	<i>Juglans nigra</i> - Black Walnut
Light Requirements: Sun, Partial Shade	Quercus acutissima - Sawtooth Oak
Water Requirements: Moist	
Site carefully; difficult to transplant	
Use as an ornamental shade tree on large properties	*In the Mid-Atlantic Region, it is native in DC, MD, and in most of PA. It is uncommon in the Piedmont and rare in the Coastal Plain of DE. It is common in the mountains and infrequent in the Piedmont and Coastal Plain in VA. In NoVA, it is native only to Prince William County.
Hardiness: USDA Zones 4–8	

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Images by Elaine Mills, Meadowlark Botanical Gardens



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