PLANT FACT SHEET

Carya cordiformis (Wangenh.) K.Koch.

GENUS *Carya* **FAMILY** Juglandaceae

COMMON NAMES Bitternut, Bitternut hickory, Swamp hickory

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Seeds, Nuts

The kernels are bitter. They are sometimes eaten.

DESCRIPTION

A medium sized tree. It grows to 24 m high. The trunk can be 50 cm across. The trunk is long and branch free. The limbs are spreading and the crown is round. The bark is grey or pale brown and smooth. It gradually develops narrow cracks. The leaves are 12-20 cm long with 7-11 leaflets along it. The leaflet at the end is about the same size as the last pair. The leaflets get smaller towards the base or the leaf stalk. The leaflets are slightly curved and have fine teeth. They are shiny and dark green on top and paler, hairy and with small dots underneath. They turn yellow in autumn, The male and female flowers are separate. The fruit have irregular lines along them when young. The fruit are broadest at the tip. They are 20-35 mm long. They occur either singly or in pairs. The nuts are small, rounded and thin shelled. They can be cut with a knife. The kernel is reddish-brown and bitter.

HABITAT

It grows in moist lowlands in Canada and the USA. It can tolerate some shade. It is very hardy. It suits hardiness zones 4-9.

PRODUCTION

Cultivation

Plants can be grown from seed which should be sown where they are to grow. They are not easy to transplant.

Harvesting and Seed Production

A fast growing tree. Trees start to produce nuts after 30 years. Nut production is high every 3-5 years. Trees can live for 150 years.

NOTES

There are about 14-25 Carya species.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)

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ONLINE FACT SHEET https://www.echocommunity.org/en/resources/e93d5b13-75dd-4cf3-81d2-668ed4aadc8d