



butternut

Juglans cinerea

Kingdom: Plantae
Division/Phylum: Anthophyta
Class:
Order:
Family:

FEATURES

The butternut, or white walnut, is a deciduous tree that may grow to 90 feet tall with a trunk three feet in diameter. Its bark is light gray and divided by furrows into scaly ridges. The pith in the twigs is chocolate-colored and divided by partitions. The pinnately compound leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. Each leaf may have up to 17 leaflets. The lance-shaped leaflet may be three inches long and two inches wide. The leaflet is uneven at the base, toothed along the edges, hairy and sometimes sticky. Male and female flowers are separate but located on the same tree. Male (staminate) flowers are arranged in yellow-green catkins, and female (pistillate) flowers are in small spikes. None of the flowers have petals. The fruits are nuts arranged in groups of two to five. Nuts are ovoid-oblong, up to two and one-half inches long and sticky-hairy. Each nut is pointed at one end and has well-developed wings. The husk on the nut is thick, and the seed is sweet to the taste.

BEHAVIORS

The butternut may be found in scattered locations throughout Illinois. The butternut grows in rich woods. This tree blooms in April and May when its leaves are partly grown. The wood is used for making furniture and for interior finishing. The nut is edible.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
Biodiversity of Illinois, Volume 2: Woodland Habitats CD-ROM.