

Ironwood

Ostrya virginiana



Description: small tree to 35 feet tall less than 1 foot diameter with irregular, rounded, open crown usually in forest understory. Bark brown, shredded and scaly. Hop like fruits resemble Japanese lanterns. Margins of thin leaves have many fine teeth

Leaves: alternate on the twig, simple, formed on very short to quarter-inch, slender, hairy stems. Blades thin, oval to 5 in long, half as wide, long pointed tip edges finally double tooth dark yellow-green and smooth above, paler below with hair tufts at vein angles. Turn yellow-brown and fall

Bark: rich brown, smooth on young branches and small trees. Brown and breaking into short, flat strips at maturity giving a shredded or scaly appearance to large trees

Flowers: unisexual flowers born separately on the same tree. Male flowers and long tuft in, slender, drooping clusters of 3 female and small 1/3 in, reddish clusters at branch tips

Fruits: fruits, which resemble elongated clusters of hops, have small greater than 1/3 in flat and seeds enclosed in papery, inflated husks

Habitat/Range: Upland Woods, hillside, and rocky slopes, usually under a taller forest canopy throughout Indiana.