

Bitternut Hickory
Carya cordiformis



Description: medium to large trees to 90 feet tall, 3 feet diameter, with straight trunks and narrow crowns, but spreading with age. Leaves compound with 7 through 9 leaflets. Bark tight, not scaly or shaggy. Buds bright, sulfur yellow. Nuts small within husks and shells. Kernels are very bitter

Leaves: alternate on a twig to 1 foot long, singly compound with 7 through 9 ladder-like, narrow leaflets, each tapering to a narrow point, and with saw tooth edges. Bright green above, often hairy below. Turn, bright yellow to brown and fall

Bark: shallow fissures and flat ridges are interlaced, but remain tight on the trunk and do not become scaly or shaggy.

Flowers: unisexual on the same tree. Male flowers and slender clusters of medium-length 3 3/4 in, female flowers small, orange short spikes.

Fruits: small to 1 in husk yellowish, thin less than 1/8 in, leathery, splits only halfway to a base, winged above the middle. Nut smooth, thin-shelled, very bitter.

Habitat/Range: occupies a variety of sites from rich bottomlands where it does best to moist upland woods to dryer hillsides when spread; found throughout Indiana.