

Identification Characteristics of Hickory Species Native to Illinois

Quick Reference Chart



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Common Name	Leaflet Number*	Rachis	Twig	Bud	Fruit size	Fruit husk	Bark
Water hickory <i>Carya aquatica</i>	7-17	Hairy	Thin, hairy	Elongate, hairy and brown	Medium, pear-shaped	Thin, winged	Variable, often very platy
Bitternut hickory <i>Carya cordiformis</i>	7-11	Smooth	Thin, smooth	Elongate, sulfur yellow	Small, rounded	Thin, winged about half-way	Tight, not scaly
Pignut hickory <i>Carya glabra</i>	5-7 (5)	Smooth	Thin, smooth	Small	Small, rounded or pear-shaped	Thin, does not split to base	Tight, not scaly
Pecan hickory <i>Carya illinoensis</i>	9-17	Hairy	Medium, hairy	Elongate, hairy and brown	Small, elongate	Thin, winged	Platy
Shellbark hickory <i>Carya laciniosa</i>	5-9 (7)	Sparse hairs	Stout, smooth	Large, hairy	Very large, rounded	Very thick, splits easily	Loose, scaly
Red hickory <i>Carya ovalis</i>	5-9 (7)	Smooth	Thin, smooth	Small, rounded	Small, rounded	Thin, splits to the base, may be slightly winged	Tight or slightly scaly, deeply furrowed on larger individuals
Shagbark hickory <i>Carya ovata</i>	5-7 (5)	Fuzzy	Stout, fuzzy	Large	Large, rounded	Thick, splits easily	Loose, scaly
Pale hickory <i>Carya pallida</i>	7-9 (7)	Hairy and scaly	Thin, smooth or slightly hairy	Small, yellow scales	Variable, rounded or pear-shaped	Medium, covered in yellow scales	Tight, not scaly
Black hickory <i>Carya texana</i>	5-9 (7)	Hairy	Thin, hairy	Small, yellow scales and reddish hairs	Variable, rounded	Thin, covered in yellow scales	Very dark, deeply furrowed
Mockernut hickory <i>Carya tomentosa</i>	7-9	Hairy	Stout, hairy	Large	Large, rounded	Very thick, splits easily	Tight, dark and deeply furrowed at maturity

*Leaflet number given in the range, followed by, if applicable, the number typically observed

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