

Carya ovata
Shagbark hickory, Shellbark hickory



Carya ovata (white bitternut) is one of the most iconic trees in the eastern United States. It is found on drier, more nutrient-rich slopes as well as moist but well-drained soils, where it can develop deep roots, in flood plains and valleys, together with *Cercis canadensis*, *Tilia americana*, *Ostrya virginiana* and *Acer rubrum.* It is a slow-growing, robust and sturdy climax species, with a cylindrical trunk. It can ultimately reach a height of between 20 and 25 metres. *Carya ovata* makes an inversely ovate, semi-open crown approximately 15 to 20 metres wide, displaying both characteristic erect and also pendulous branches. In forests, the tree remains narrow and may grow to a height of 45 metres.

The summer yellow-green foliage of *Carya ovata* is made up of 5 to 7 leaflets, the top leaves being elongated egg-shaped. In the cool of autumn, the leaves put on a spectacular display of rich golden yellow to yellow-brown. The buds of the white bitternut are also typical, being quite large and with overlapping scales. The flowers which appear in May - male green-yellow catkins and female flower spikes in a similar colour - are unremarkable and followed by 4 ribbed round nuts, of which the husk splits open on the underside. The seeds are edible and have a sweet taste; cracking the nuts is a challenge however. In juvenile trees the bark is smooth and grey-brown, older specimens (after around 30 to 40 years) are easy to identify by the firm, long characteristic peeling strands of bark and 'loose' looking bark.

Carya ovata is not often planted: the tough, deep growing roots make it difficult to transplant. The species tolerates wind, drought, poor soils and even soils polluted with heavy metals. All these attributes, combined with the characteristic bark and tremendous autumn colours make *Carya ovata* a worthy selection. Nevertheless, the white bitternut - on account of its ultimate size - really looks best in large gardens and parks in particular.

SEASONAL COLOURS

jan	feb	mar	apr	mei	jun	jul	aug	sep	okt	nov	dec

TYPES OF PLANTING

Tree types: standard trees, half-stem trees, feathered trees, multi-stemmed trees, climate trees, shade trees, characteristic trees, fruit trees | **Topiary on stem**: multi-stem umbrella

USE

Location: park, large garden, cemetery | **Pavement**: none | **Planting concepts**: Climate planting, urban planting

CHARACTERISTICS

Crown shape: wide egg-shaped | **Crown structure**: semi-open | **Height**: 20 - 25 m | **Width**: 15 - 20 m | **Winter hardiness zone**: 5B - 9A

ASPECTS

Wind: tolerant to wind | **Soil**: loess, sabulous clay, light clay, sand, loamy soil | **Nutrient level**: moderately rich in nutrients, rich in nutrients | **Soil moisture level**: dry, moist, wet | **Light requirements**: sun, partial shade | **pH range**: acidic, neutral | **Host plant/forage plant**: birds, small mammals, humans | **Extreme environments**: tolerant to dryness, tolerates heat

PLANTKENMERKEN

Flowers: catkins, raceme, striking | **Flower colour**: yellow-green | **Flowering period**: April - May | **Leaf colour**: green | **Leaves**: deciduous, lanceolate, big, dentate, composite | **Autumn colour**: yellow, golden yellow, yellow-brown | **Fruits**: striking, edible, large, nut, husk | **Fruit colour**: brown, green | **Bark colour**: grey-brown | **Bark**: peeling, smooth | **Twig colour**: grey-brown | **Twigs**: bare, thickly branched, long shoots | **Root system**: deep, coarse roots, tap root

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