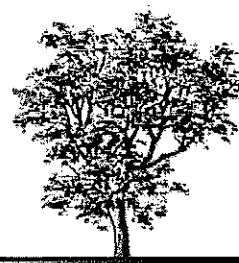


PECAN^{58/118}

Carya illinoensis



The pecan tree is best known for its popular, edible fruit. It is said to be the largest of the native hickories. Pecan is one of the most valuable cultivated plants originating in North America.

Mature Height and Growth

At maturity it will vary in height from 110 to 140 feet and 2 to 4 feet in diameter. Open-grown pecan trees have a spreading crown but those in dense stands prune themselves quite well and develop compact, pyramidal crowns.

Best Planting Site

The pecan tree grows well on moist well-drained, fertile soils, and should be planted where there is plenty of sunlight. It is the least tolerant and fastest-growing of the hickories. It is one of the most tolerant species to flooding but prefers bottomland sites along a river or stream edge where the soil drains well after a flood subsides.



Leaves

The coarsely toothed leaves of the pecan are 12" – 20" long with 9 to 17 oblong, long-pointed leaflets.

Flowers

The flowers are tiny, greenish and appear in early spring before leaves. Male, with 5 – 6 stamens, many in slender drooping catkins, 3 hanging from 1 stalk. Female, 2 – 10 flowers at tip of the same twig.

Fruit

The smooth nut is reddish-brown and sharp pointed, with a 4 sectional dark brown husk that splits open when the fruit is ripe. Shape of the nut ranges from almost round to oblong and size ranges from ½" to 1 ½" in diameter.



Uses

The fruit of the pecan tree is an excellent source of food for squirrels, birds, turkey, and deer. The pecan tree has a high timber value for saw logs and veneer and is sometimes planted as a shade tree. It is occasionally grown for the nut crop in Indiana but is an important crop in the southern states.

Illustrations taken from: Brockman, Frank. "Trees of North America. 1968

