

Hickory - *Carya ovata*



Deciduous Height 60 to 90 feet. Trunk diameter 2 to 3 feet . A fast growing tree, it matures in 20 years and can live for 200 years. The tallest recorded shagbark hickory is in Sumter National Forest, South Carolina. It is 153 feet high with a trunk diameter of 4 1/2 feet. Shagbark hickory is found in mature forests throughout the entire eastern half of the United States. It is found as far north as Maine, as far south as Georgia and as far west as Texas and Minnesota. The greatest commercial production, however, is in the Mid-Atlantic, Central and South Atlantic States.

A narrow, up-right woodland tree, shagbark hickory is a true native American, found nowhere else. The color of this hickory's wood is pale cream to a light reddish tan with a fine inconspicuous brown line. A very hard wood, hickory is exceptionally tough, strong and resilient. Like its cousin pecan, it shrinks considerably in drying but once stable is a very useful, reliable wood. Shagbark hickory combines strength with flexibility and is a good choice, like ash, where high shock resistance is required. Like ash, also, it is used for baseball bats.



The wood grain of hickory is very attractive, warm and reminiscent of early American (Americana) decor. It is a popular choice in wood-grain panels for interior country design uses. For the same reason it is a good choice for furniture, architectural millwork and decorative details. It is well-suited for steam bending and for highly stressed machine parts. Some woods are heavier than hickory and some woods are more flexible and resilient, but no other wood combines the two as well. In fact, the American sport of harness racing developed with the invention of the light sulky in which hickory is the primary component. Hickory is available as veneer and lumber. It falls in the average price range. Historically, hickory was the ultimate wood of choice for the highest quality barrel hoops, but never for the barrel stays as it has a low tolerance for moisture. Today it is mostly used for decorative paneling veneers and for furniture manufacture. It is a perfect choice for molded and bent plywood needs that require hickory's level of flexibility. For the same reason it is great for striking tools, such as handles for hammers and pick axes. It is used for agricultural implements and gymnasium apparatus. Hickory is fine for skis, bats, golf clubs, and poles. It is also used for ladder rungs and dowels. Lower grades of hickory are used for pallets and blocking.