

Carya ovata

[Synonyms : *Carya alba*, *Carya alba* subsp. *ovata*, *Carya borealis*, *Carya mexicana*, *Carya ovalis* var. *borealis*, *Carya ovalis* var. *complanata*, *Carya ovalis* var. *ellipsoidalis*, *Carya ovalis* var. *fraxinifolia*, *Carya ovalis* var. *grandis*, *Carya ovalis* var. *holmesiana*, *Carya ovalis* var. *nuttallii*, *Carya ovalis* var. *pubescens*, *Carya ovata* var. *borealis*, *Carya ovata* var. *complanata*, *Carya ovata* var. *ellipsoidalis*, *Carya ovata* var. *fraxinifolia*, *Carya ovata* var. *mexicana*, *Carya ovata* var. *nuttallii*, *Carya ovata* var. *ovata*, *Carya ovata* var. *pubescens*, *Hicoria alba*, *Hicoria borealis*, *Hicoria carolinae-septentrionalis*, *Hicoria ovata*, *Hicorius ovata* var. *nuttallii*, *Juglans ovata*, *Scoria ovata*]

SHAGBARK HICKORY is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern North America it has greenish catkins and leaves which turn yellow to golden brown in Autumn.

It is also known as *Chasu* (Dakota North American Indian), Hickory nut, Littlenut shagbark, Littlenut shagbark hickory, Little shellbark hickory, *Nosi* (Omaha and Ponca North American Indian), *Ořechovec vejčítý* (Czech), *Paja* (Winnebago North American Indian), *Sahpakskiisu* (Pawnee North American Indian), Shellbark hickory, *Skidhickory* (Swedish), Small big-nut hickory, and *Valkohikkori* (Finnish).

Ovata is derived from Latin *ovum* (egg) meaning ‘egg-shaped’ with reference to the leaves.

Various North American Indian tribes, including the Dakota, Pawnee, Omaha and Winnebago, made sugar from the sap, and the Iroquois used the nuts to make a beverage. Many of the tribes such as the Dakota, Iroquois, Pawnee, Omaha, Chippewa and Winnebago ate the raw kernels like walnuts (*Juglans*) or added them to puddings. The nuts were used by the Ponca, Omaha, Dakota, Winnebago, Iroquois and Pawnee to make soup, and the Potawatomi and Meskwaki tribes stored the nuts for Winter use. As if this were not enough authorities note that the nuts were a staple in the Iroquois diet and they used them not only for sauces and baby food, but also added them to bread and used them as an ingredient in specially prepared delicacies.

The nut oil, as that from other close relatives, was mixed with bear grease by the Iroquois who used this sticky stuff as a mosquito repellent.

Some of the North American tribes (not least the Potawatomi and the Chippewa) used the resilient wood for their bows, and this was another member of the genus which supplied material for the Omaha snowshoes. Its tough wood is still used today for lacrosse sticks which are made from a single length and are carefully bent with steam into the hooked shape necessary to hold the basket-head. A strong hickory frame was also used for the first aeroplane without an internal skeleton that was built by the French. This light brown wood used also to be popular for golf clubs and putters.

As firewood it is highly esteemed. Many even contend that it is the best naturally available fuelwood on that Continent.

Shagbark hickory’s medicinal qualities were appreciated by several North American Indian tribes. The Delaware used a bark infusion for treating some female problems, the Chippewa believed that inhaling steam from small shoots placed on hot stones would cure a headache, and apart from being an ingredient in a mixture taken by adult members of the Iroquois tribe suffering from worms, a bark decoction was used by them internally and externally for arthritis.

The nuts (often known locally as White walnuts') are sold and eaten widely, and the wood has been used on a commercial scale to make agricultural implements, baskets and tool handles.