

LEAF KEY

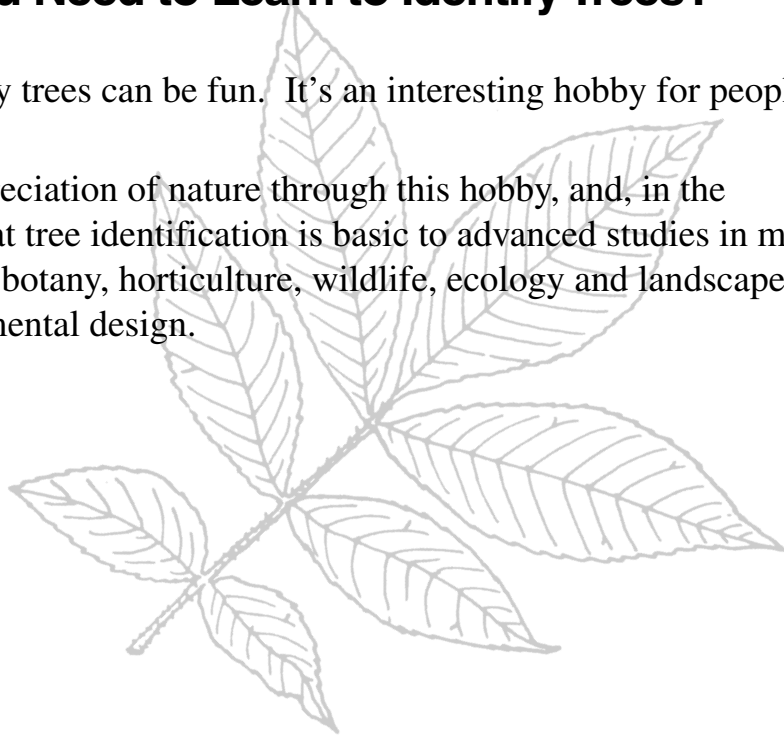
to common trees in Louisiana



Why Do You Need to Learn to Identify Trees?

Learning to identify trees can be fun. It's an interesting hobby for people of all ages.

You'll gain an appreciation of nature through this hobby, and, in the addition, you will find that tree identification is basic to advanced studies in many fields, including forestry, botany, horticulture, wildlife, ecology and landscape architecture and environmental design.



Leaf Key to Common Trees in Louisiana

How to Use the Leaf Key

It is easy to identify the common trees of Louisiana with this guide. Long words have been left out and pictures are used to identify the leaves instead of written descriptions.

Common trees include native and introduced trees from other parts of the United States or from foreign countries.

You can identify most tree leaves if you follow these steps:

1. Read the description at each numbered heading in the key on page 4 and by process of elimination find the group to which the leaf of any unknown tree belongs. Diagrams of the leaf characters used in the key are shown on page 5.
2. Turn to the picture numbers for this group. Leaf descriptions are repeated in the upper corner of each page throughout the key.
3. Match the leaf with the picture it most closely resembles to find its name.

Helpful Hints

When you are collecting leaves, note and remember if the leaves are opposite or alternate on the twigs. Opposite leaves means that there will be leaves directly across from any leaf on the twig. Alternate leaves mean that there is no leaf directly across, but up and down the twig. Trees with alternate leaves also have alternate twigs and branches. Those with opposite leaves have opposite twigs and branches. Look carefully at several leaves and twigs or examine the branching habits of any tree to be identified. Frequently, a leaf, twig or branch may have died on an opposite leaved species, and the tree appears to be an alternate type.

All leaves have a bud for next year's growth at the base of the petiole or stem. A leaf in which there is only one blade is termed a simple leaf. Compound leaves have more than one blade on a common stalk, and each of these blades is called a leaflet or little leaf. Compound leaves do not have buds at the base of the leaflets.

The leaves of all trees vary widely in size. Those on stump sprouts may often be three times larger than normal. Leaves will be smaller than usual during dry years. The illustrations have been drawn for the usual leaf sizes. You can see what the normal size is by examining the bracket at the side of each drawing. The bracket shows a one-inch scale.

The leaves of all trees vary greatly in the form. No two leaves on any single tree are precisely alike. Those on the lower branches may be somewhat different than those higher in the tree. Leaves of black oak, in particular, are extremely variable in form and shape. In using this key, try to pick a leaf that appears average in size and form for each tree.

Leaves of mulberry and sassafras trees may be either entire or lobed. Each is keyed out and illustrated under both headings.

Oak and hickory trees hybridize readily and the offspring of these crosses are difficult to identify. Hybrids of willow oak and southern red oak, for example, will often have leaves typical of both parents and all variations between them on a single branch. The parents of such hybrids can sometimes be determined by using two or more leaves that repeatedly show the widest variation in form.

A few Louisiana tree species have leaves almost alike. These will have an additional feature illustrated to aid in their identification.

Leaf Key

Drawing Nos.
(Pictures)

I. Leaves broad; definitely not needle-like or scale-like, mostly deciduous

A. Leaves alternate on the twigs

- 1. Leaves compound 1-26
- 2. Leaves simple
 - a. Leaf edge smooth 27-51
 - b. Leaf edge toothed 52-83
 - c. Leaves lobed 84-104

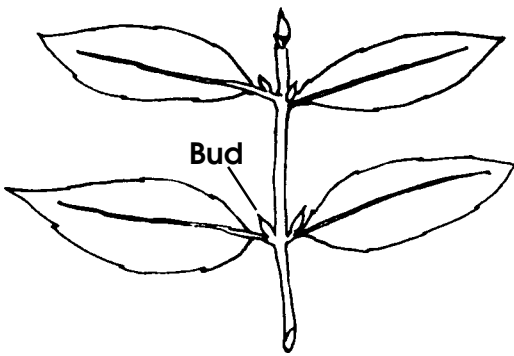
B. Leaves opposite on the twigs

- 1. Leaves compound 105-110
- 2. Leaves simple
 - a. Leaf edge smooth 111-118
 - b. Leaf edge toothed 119
 - c. Leaves lobed 120-123

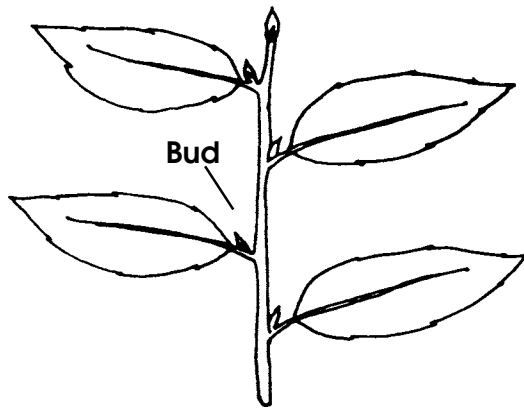
II. Leaves needle-like or scale-like; mostly evergreen

- A. Leaves needle-like 124-130
 - B. Leaves scale-like 131-132
-

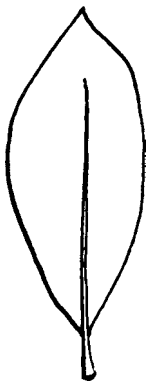
Leaf Characters



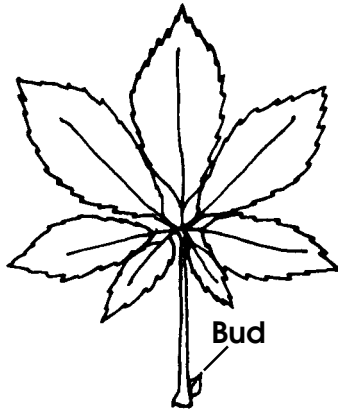
Opposite



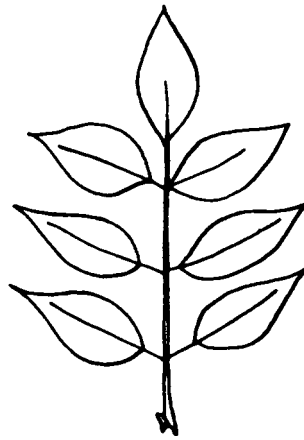
Alternate



Simple



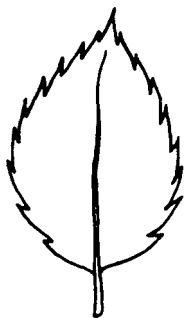
Compound



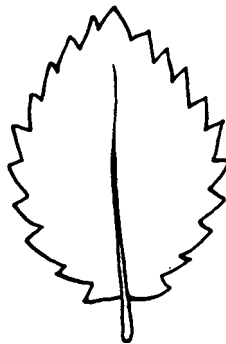
Doubly Compound



Smooth



Serrate

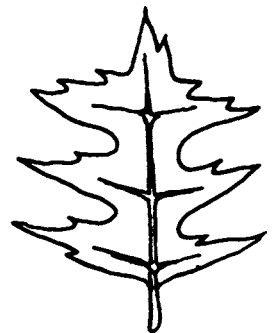


Dentate

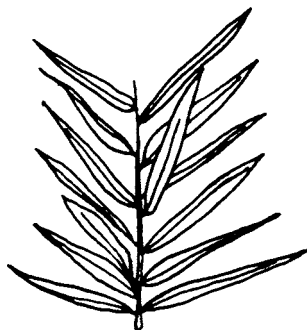
Toothed



Lobed



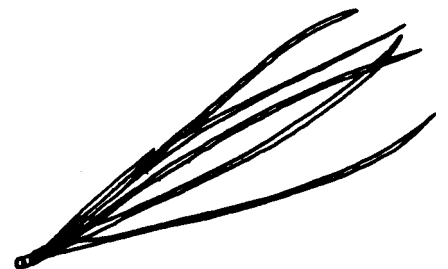
Scale-like



Single



Needle-like

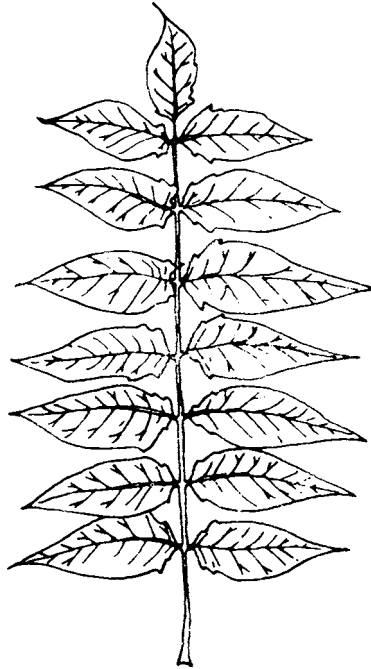


Bundles

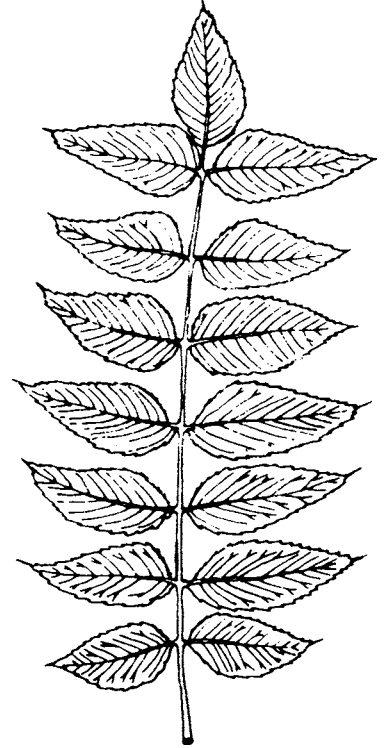
Alternate, Compound



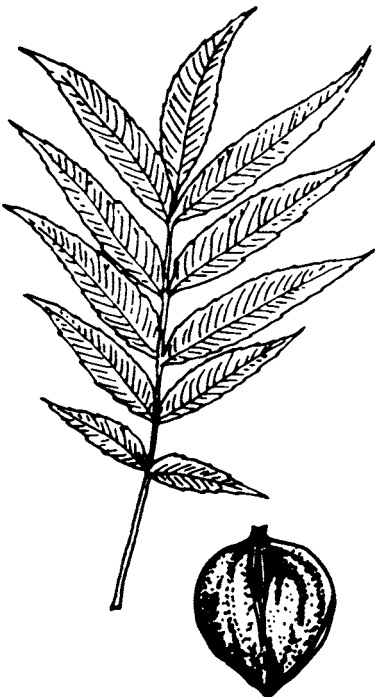
1. *Sapindus saponaria* var. *drummondii*
Western Soapberry



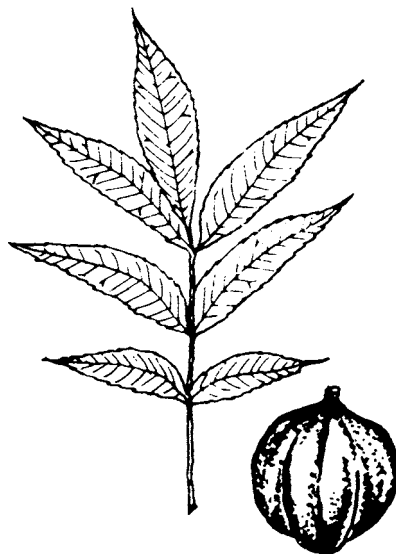
2. *Ailanthus altissima**
Tree-of-Heaven



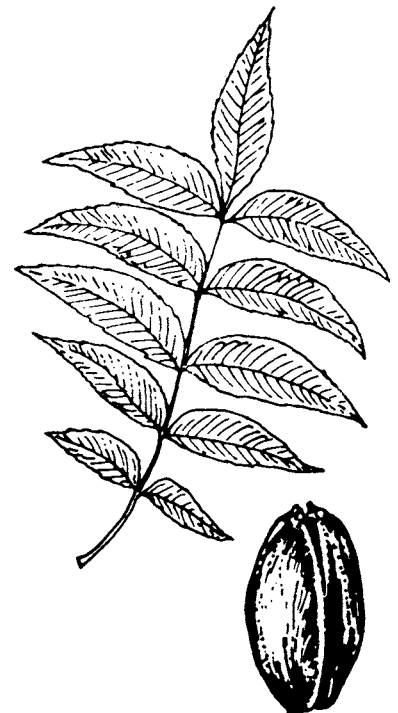
3. *Juglans nigra*
Black Walnut



4. *Carya aquatica*
Water Hickory

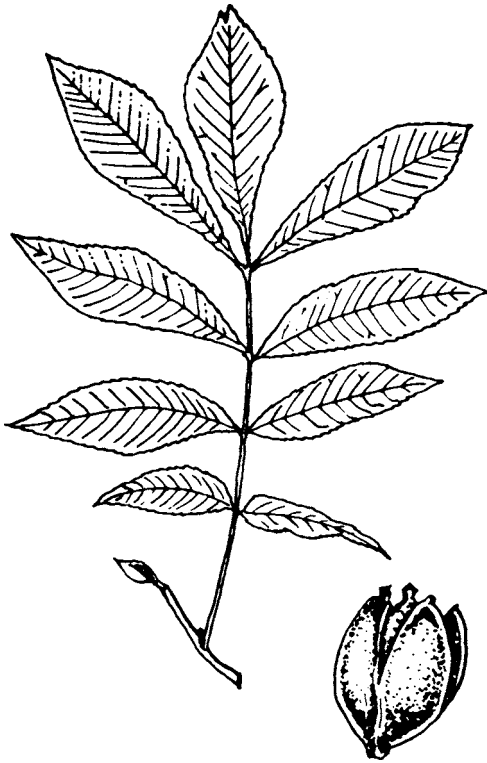


5. *Carya X lecontei*
Bitter Pecan

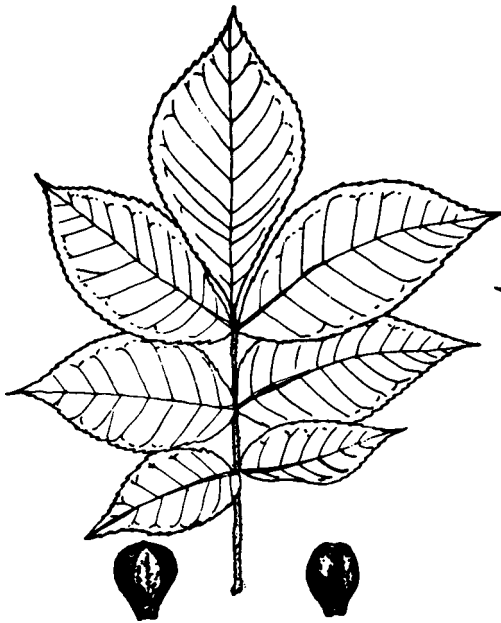


6. *Carya illinoensis*
Pecan

Alternate, Compound



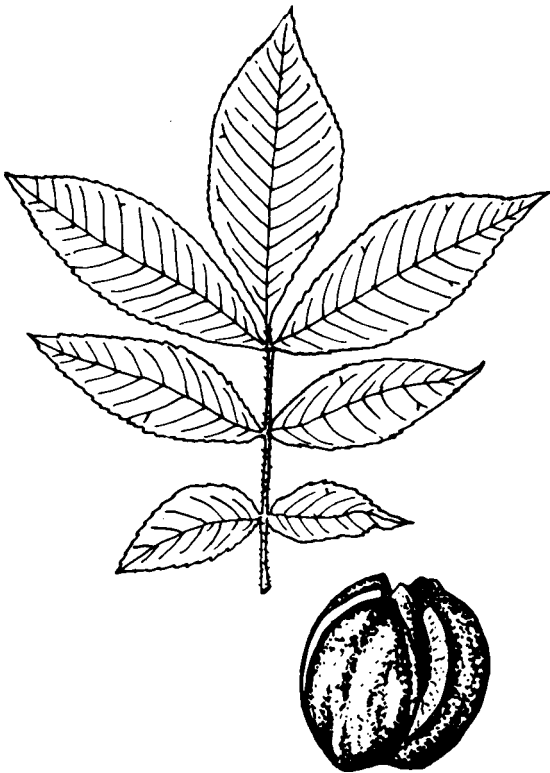
7. *Carya myristiciformis*
Nutmeg Hickory



8. *Carya glabra* var. *hirsota*
Swamp Hickory



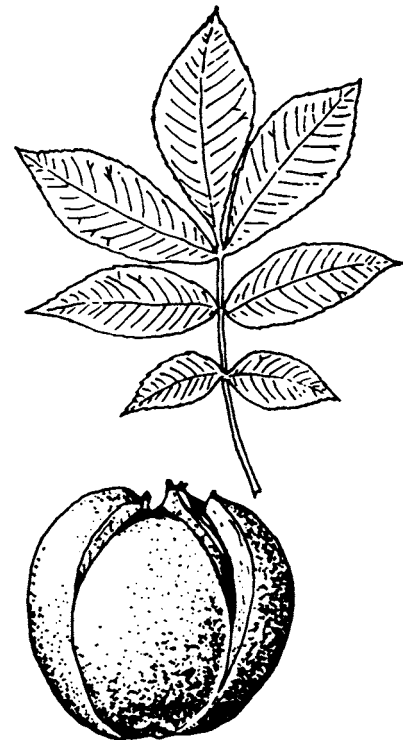
9. *Carya texana*
Black Hickory



10. *Carya alba*
Mockernut Hickory

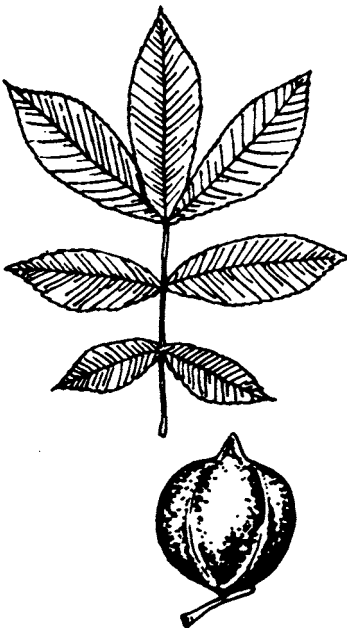


11. *Carya pallida*
Sand Hickory

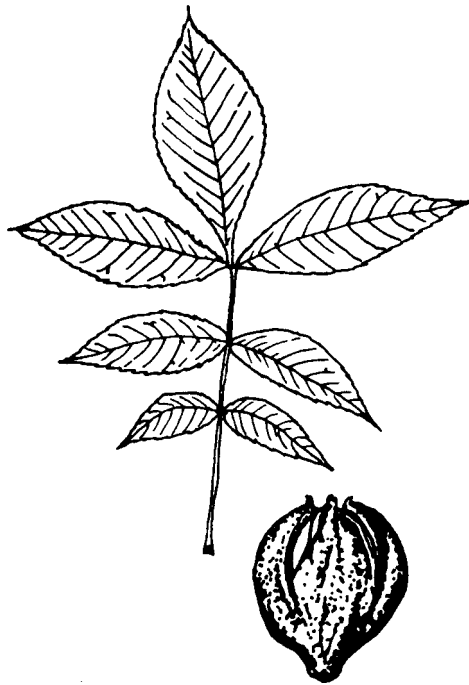


12. *Carya laciniosa*
Shellbark Hickory

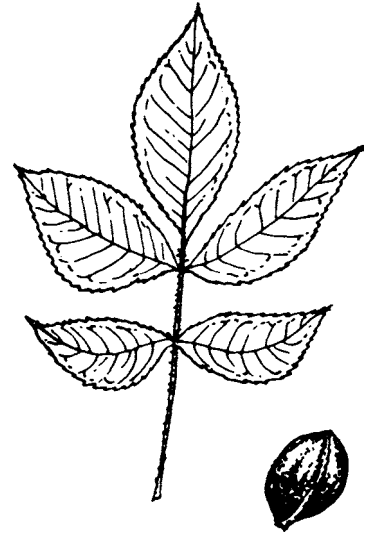
Alternate, Compound



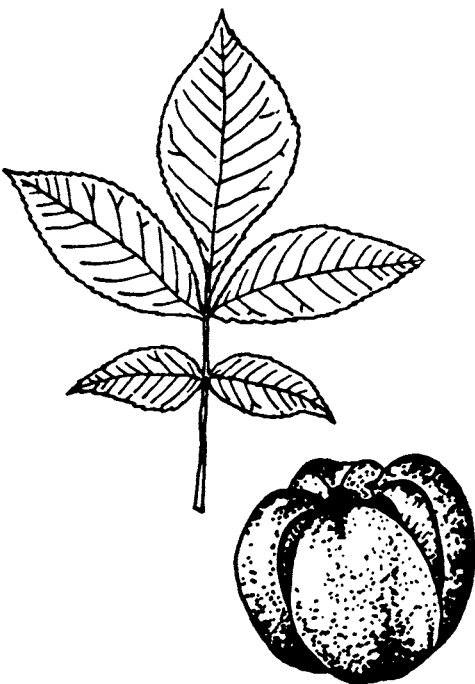
13. *Carya cordiformis*
Bitternut Hickory



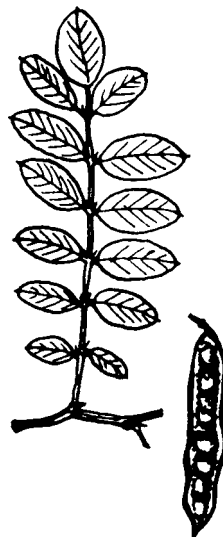
14. *Carya glabra*
Pignut Hickory



15. *Carya X ludoviciana*
Louisiana Hickory



16. *Carya ovata*
Shagbark Hickory

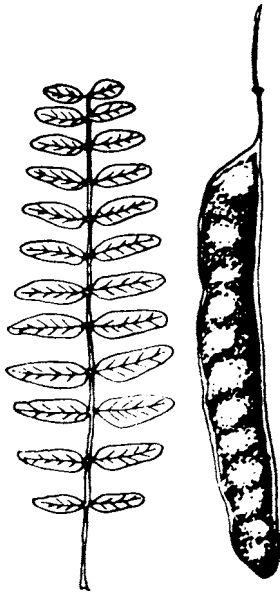


17. *Robinia pseudoacacia*
Black Locust

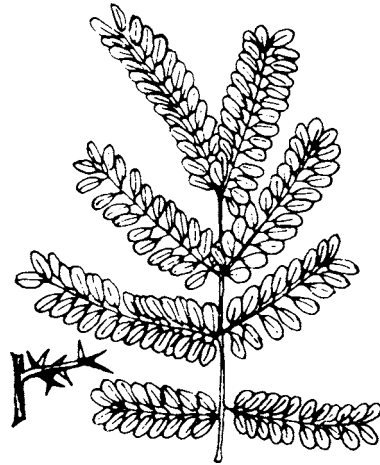


18. *Gleditsia aquatica*
Water Locust

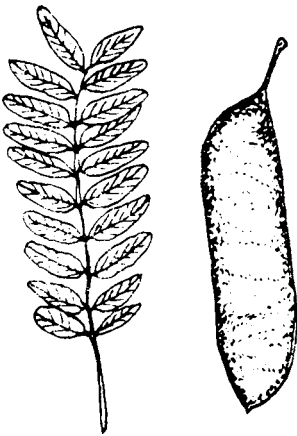
Alternate, Compound



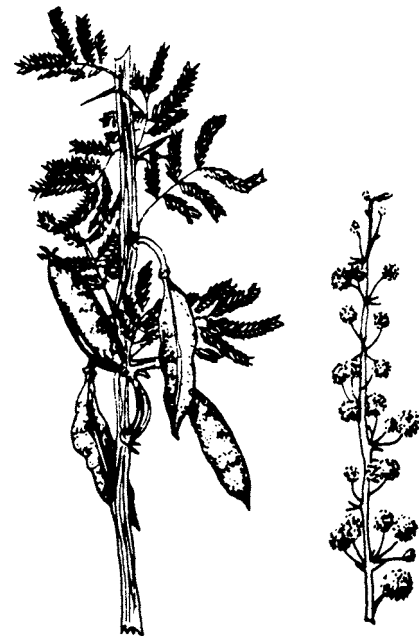
19. *Gleditsia triacanthos*
Honey Locust
(compound leaf)



20. *Gleditsia triacanthos*
Honey Locust
(doubly compound leaf)

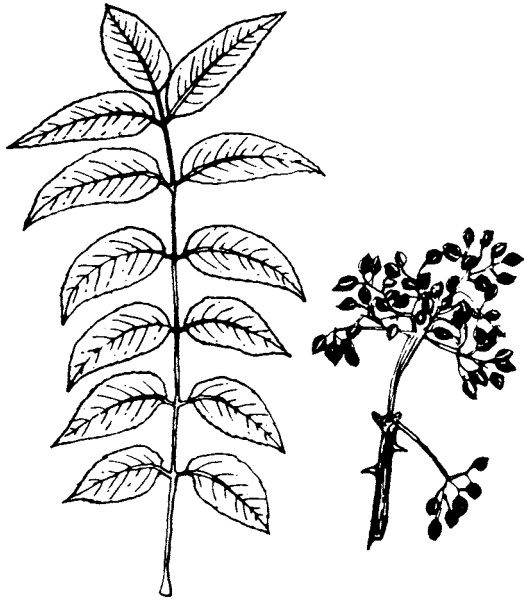


21. *Gleditsia X texana*
Texas Honey Locust

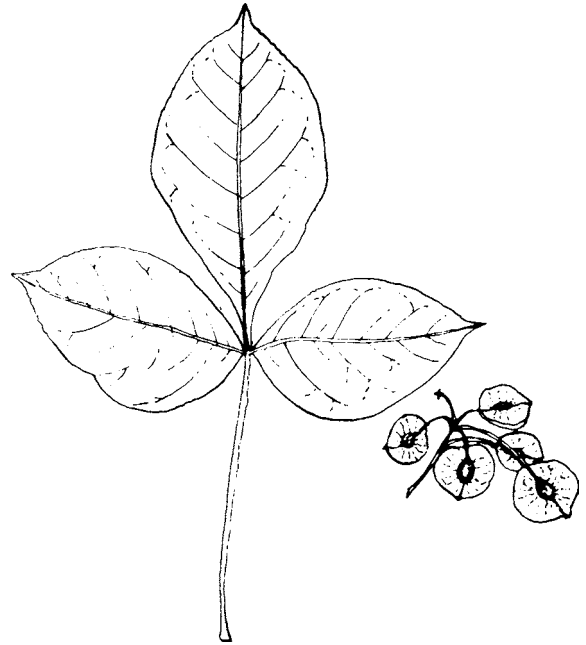


22. *Acacia parnesiana*
Opopanax

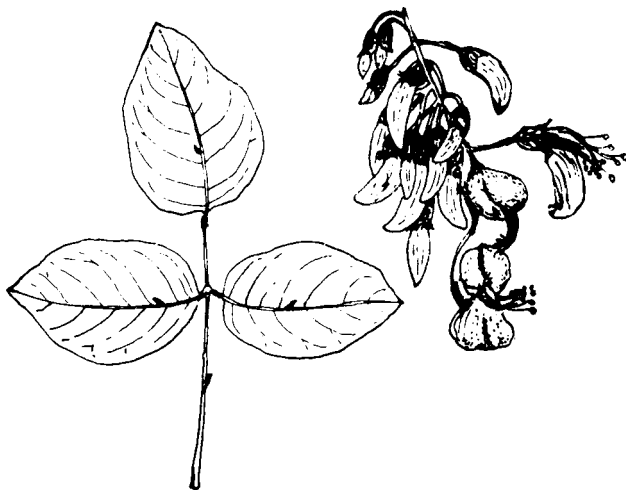
Alternate, Compound



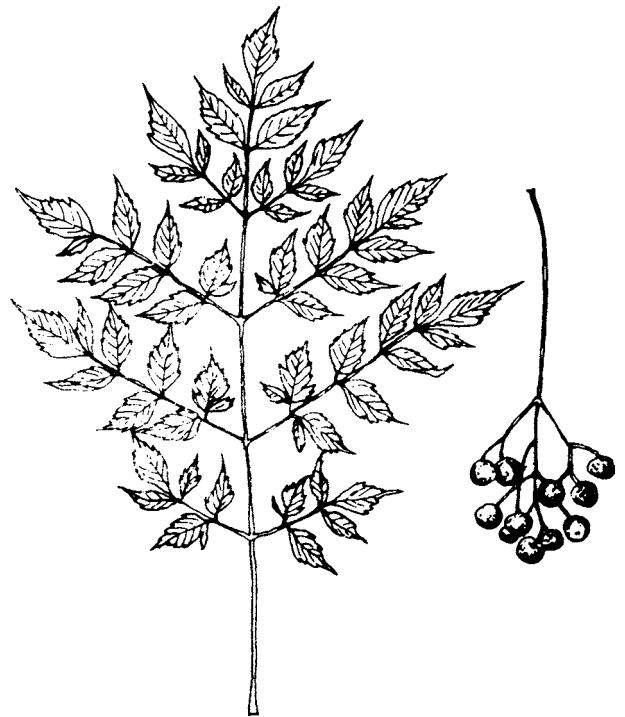
23. *Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*
Prickly Ash (Hercules-Club)



24. *Ptelea trifoliata*
Common Hoptree

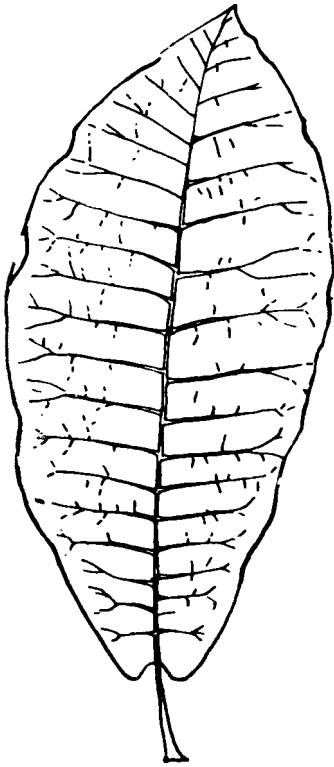


25. *Erythrina crista-galli*
Crybaby Tree

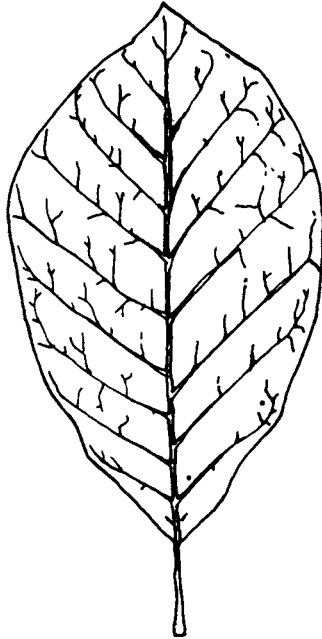


26. *Melia azedarach*
Chinaberry

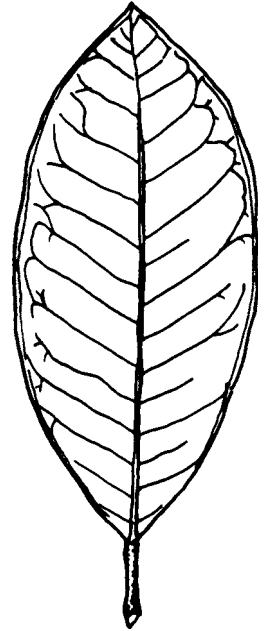
Alternate, Simple, Smooth



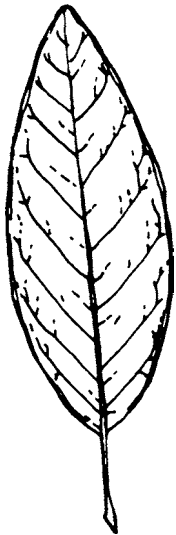
27. *Magnolia macrophylla*
Bigleaf Magnolia



28. *Magnolia pyramidata*
Cucumber Tree



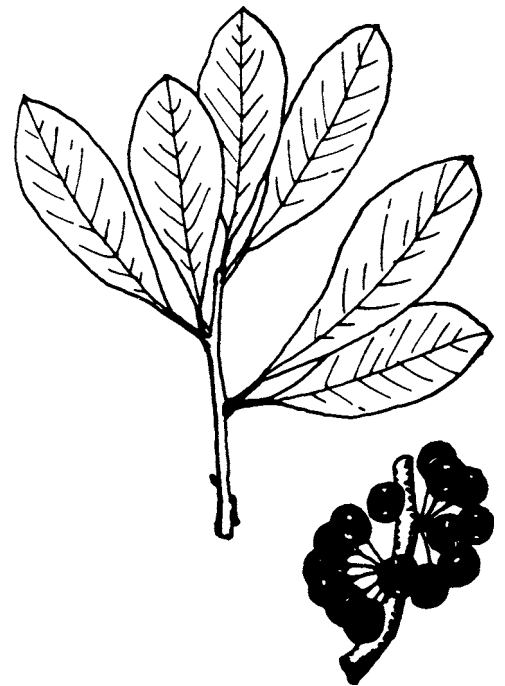
29. *Magnolia grandiflora*
Southern Magnolia



30. *Magnolia virginiana*
Sweetbay Magnolia



31. *Cyrilla racemiflora*
Swamp Titi

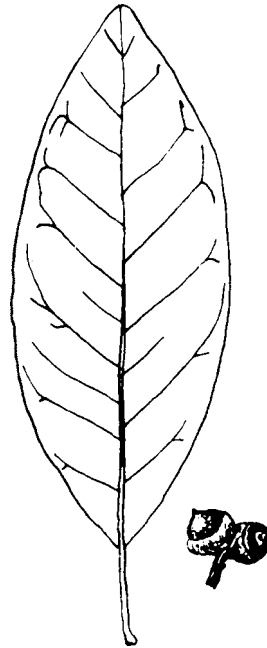


32. *Sideroxylon lycioides*
Chittumwood

Alternate, Simple, Smooth



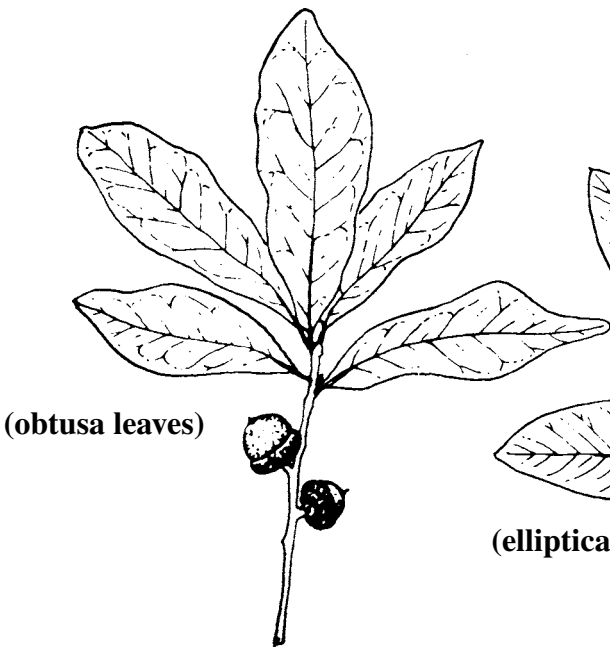
33. *Morella cerifera*
Wax Myrtle



34. *Quercus imbricaria*
Shingle Oak

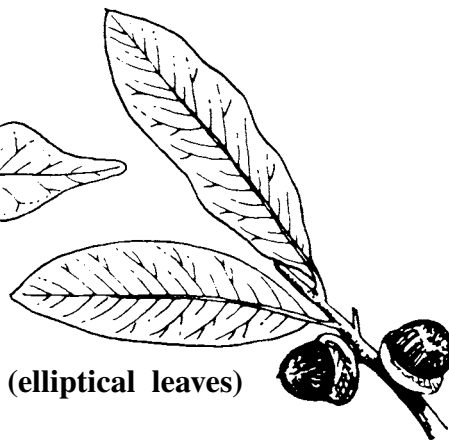


35. *Quercus phellos*
Willow Oak



(obtusa leaves)

36. *Quercus laurifolia*
Laurel Oak

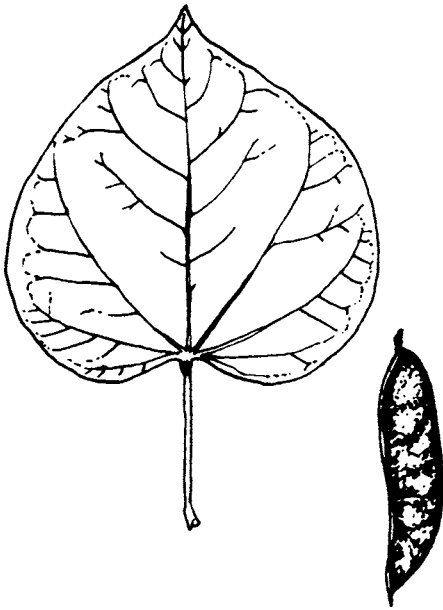


(elliptical leaves)

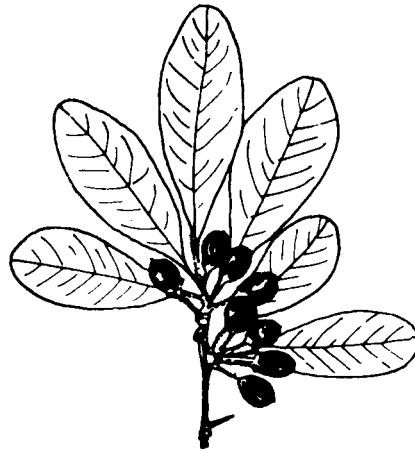


37. *Quercus virginiana*
Live Oak

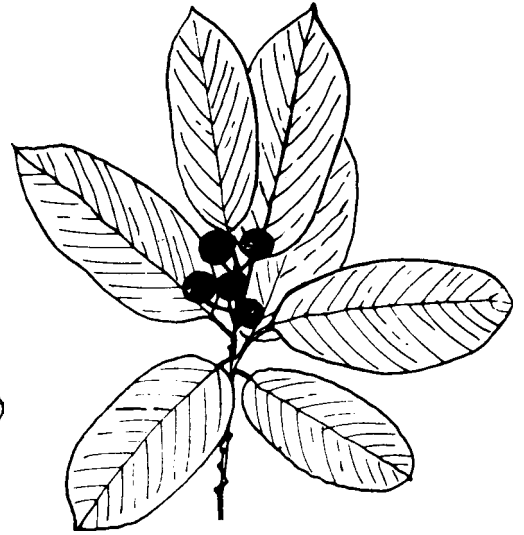
Alternate, Simple, Smooth



38. *Cercis canadensis*
Redbud



39. *Sideroxylon lanuginosum*
spp. lanuginosum
Buckhorn



40. *Frangula caroliniana*
Indian - Cherry



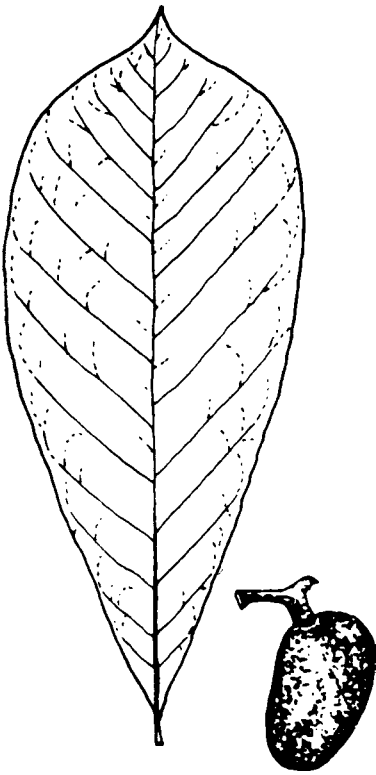
(smooth stem)



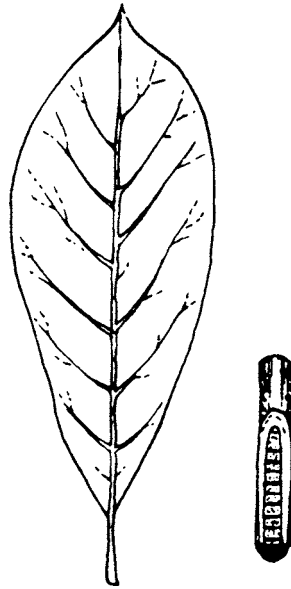
(hairy stem)

41. *Persea borbonia*
Redbay (swamp bay)

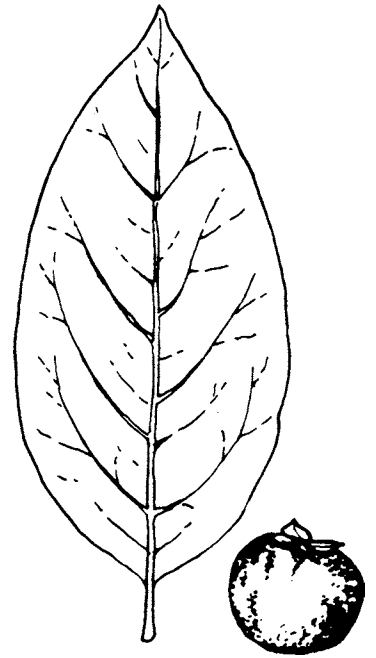
Alternate, Simple, Smooth



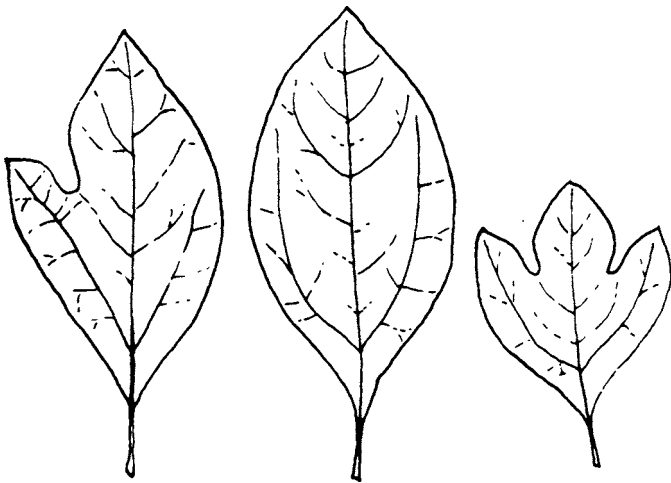
42. *Asimina triloba*
Pawpaw



43. *Nyssa sylvatica*
Blackgum



44. *Diospyros virginiana*
Persimmon



45. *Sassafras albidum*
Sassafras



46. *Maclura pomifera*
Osage-Orange

Alternate, Simple, Smooth



47. *Halesia diptera*
Silverbell



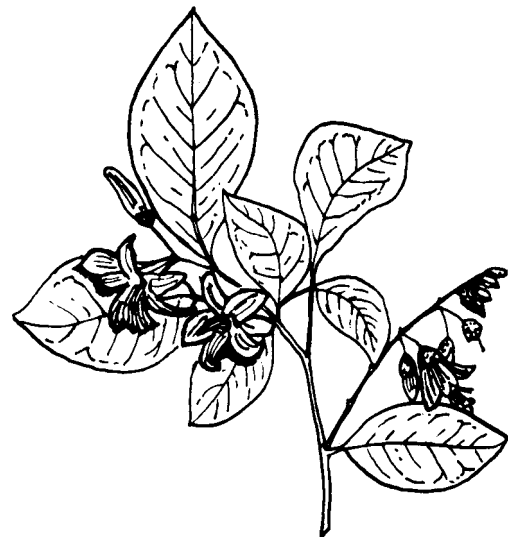
48. *Triadica sebifera**
Chinese Tallowtree



49. *Cinnamomum camphora**
Camphor-Tree

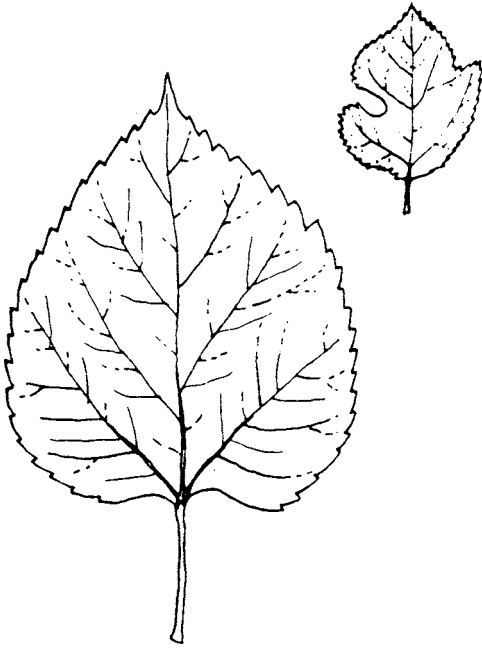


50. *Vaccinium arboreum*
Sparkleberry

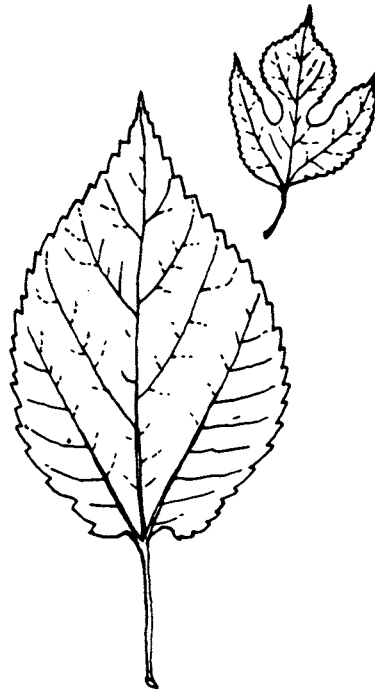


51. *Styrax grandifolia*
Snowbell

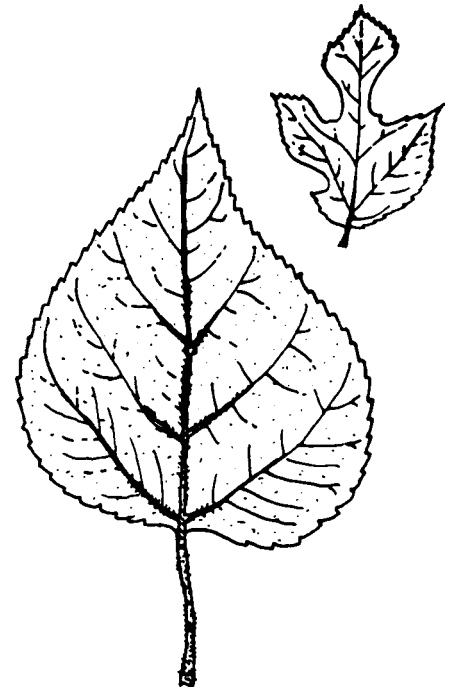
Alternate, Simple, Toothed



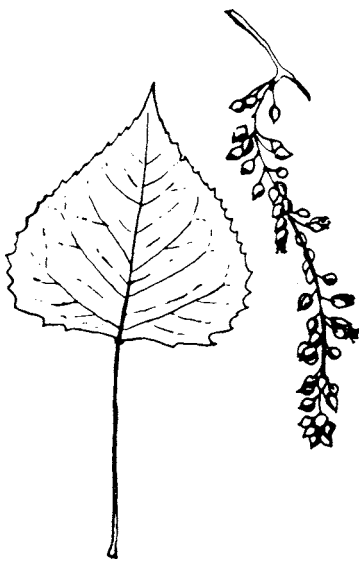
52. *Morus alba**
White Mulberry



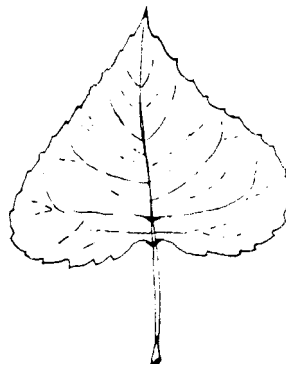
53. *Morus rubra*
Red Mulberry



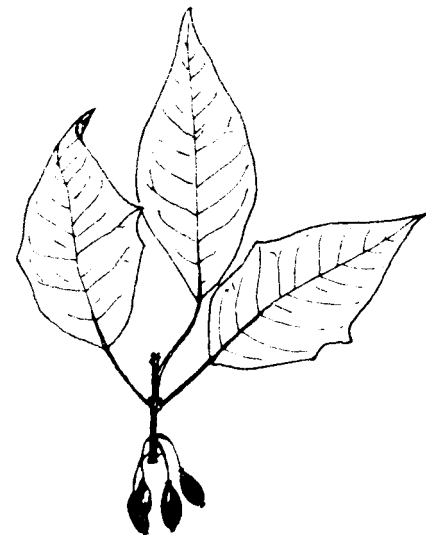
54. *Broussonetia papyrifera**
Paper Mulberry



55. *Populus deltoides*
Eastern Cottonwood

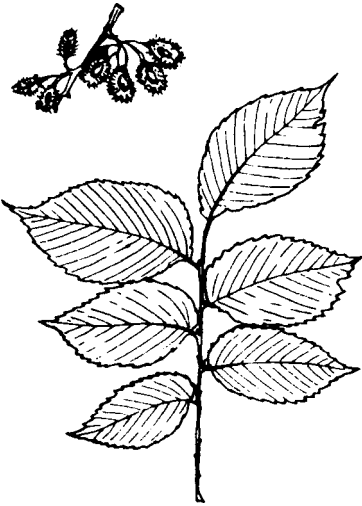


56. *Populus heterophylla*
Swamp Cottonwood



57. *Nyssa aquatica*
Tupelogum

Alternate, Simple, Toothed



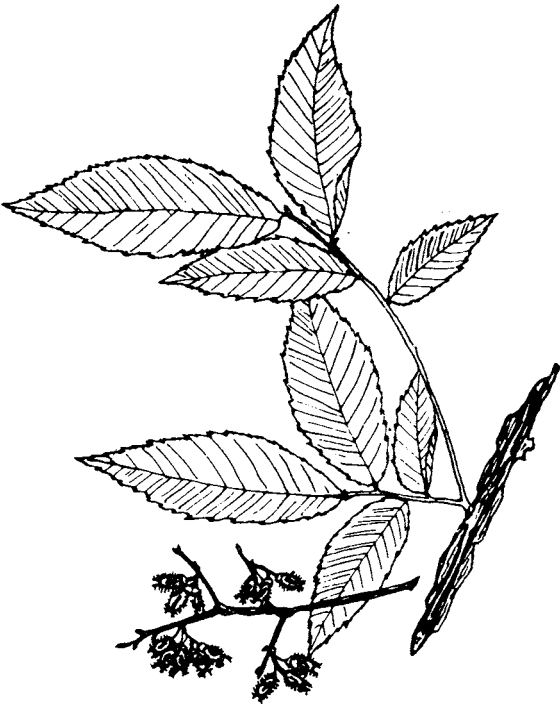
58. *Ulmus americana*
American Elm



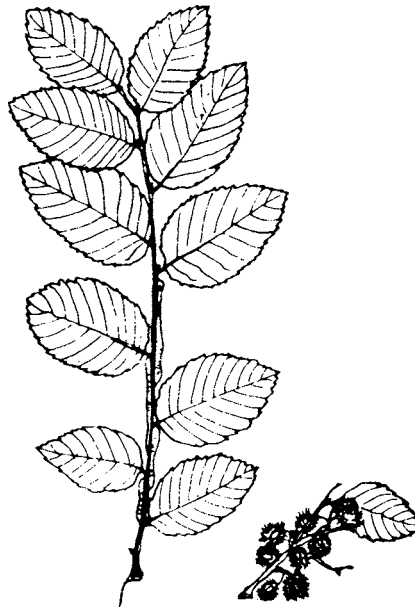
59. *Ulmus rubra*
Slippery Elm



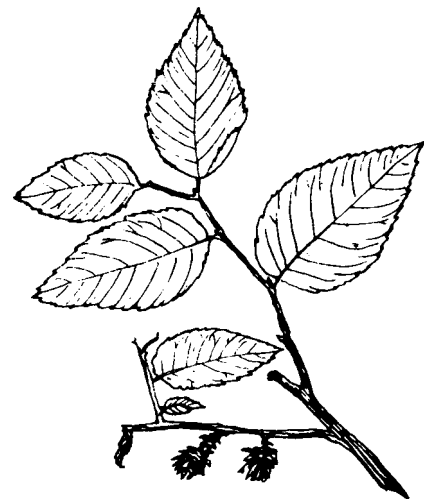
60. *Ulmus pumila**
Chinese Elm (Siberian Elm)



61. *Ulmus alata*
Winged Elm



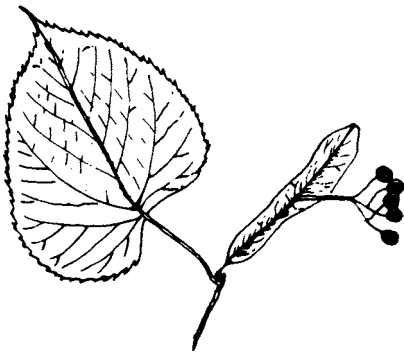
62. *Ulmus crassifolia*
Cedar Elm



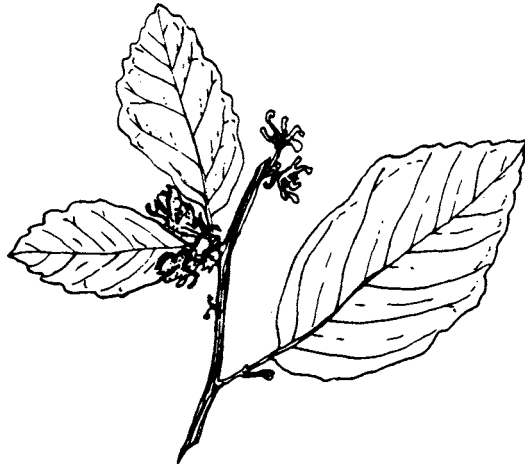
63. *Planera aquatica*
Water Elm

*not native to North America

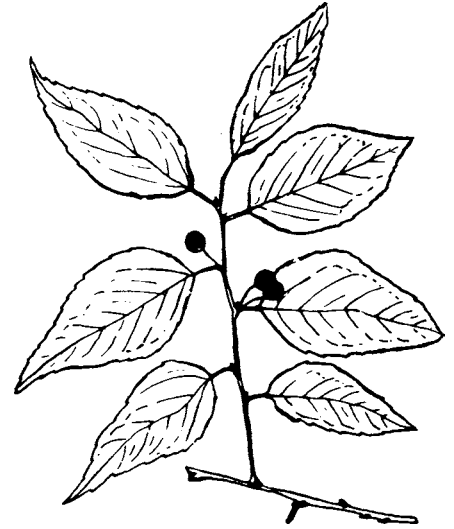
Alternate, Simple, Toothed



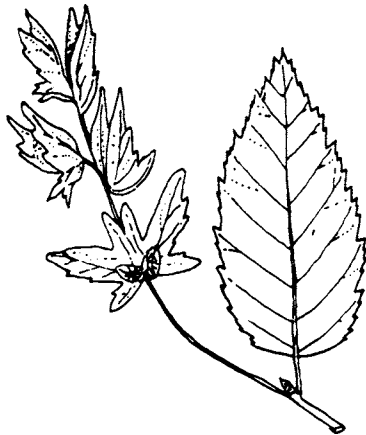
64. *Tilia americana* var. *caroliniana*
Basswood



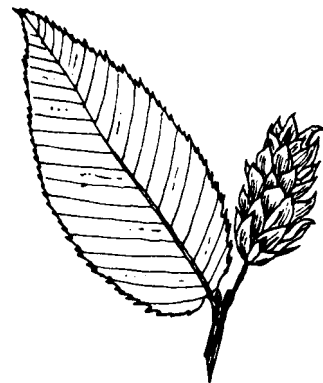
65. *Hamamelis virginiana*
Witch Hazel



66. *Celtis laevigata*
Hackberry (sugarberry)



67. *Carpinus caroliniana*
Blue Beech

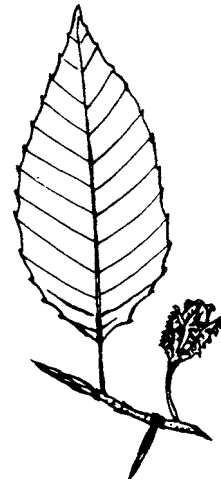


68. *Ostrya virginiana*
Hophornbeam

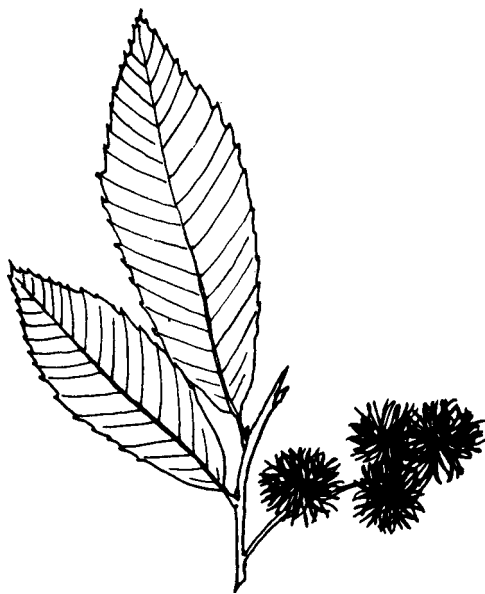
Alternate, Simple, Toothed



69. *Betula nigra*
River Birch



70. *Fagus grandifolia*
American Beech



71. *Castanea pumila*
Chinquapin

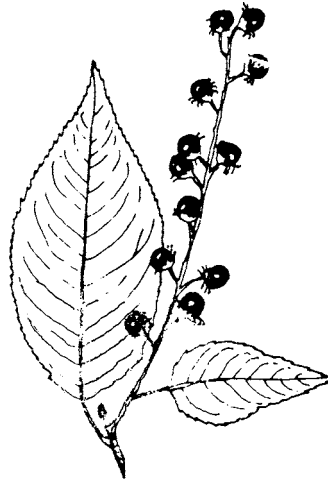


72. *Symplocos tinctoria*
Horsesugar

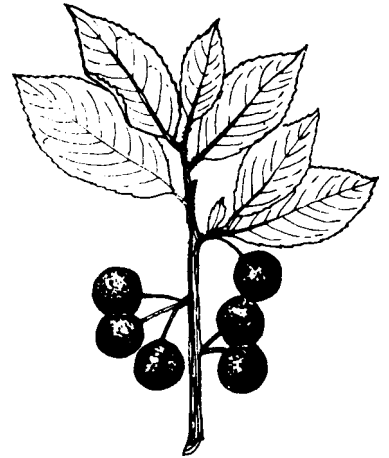
Alternate, Simple, Toothed



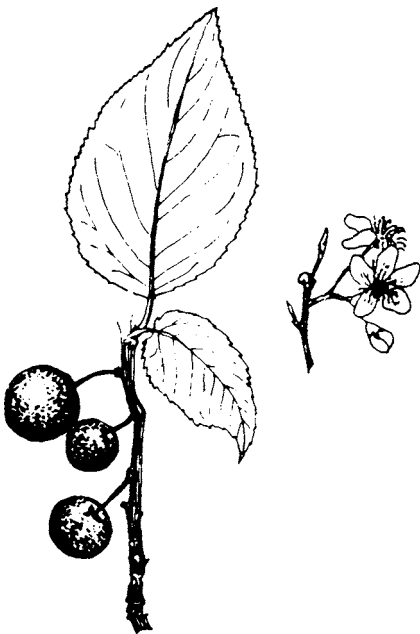
73. *Amelanchier arborea*
Service Berry (Shadbush)



74. *Prunus serotina*
Black Cherry



75. *Prunus umbellata*
Sloe



76. *Prunus mexicana*
Mexican Plum



77. *Prunus caroliniana*
Laurel Cherry

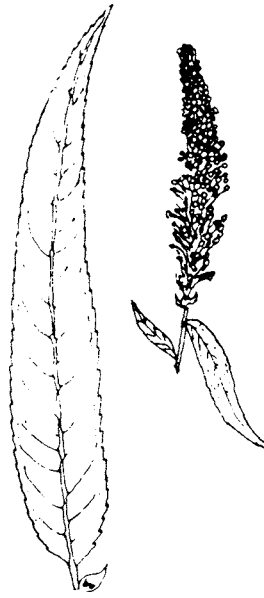


78. *Malus angustifolia*
Crap Apple

Alternate, Simple, Toothed



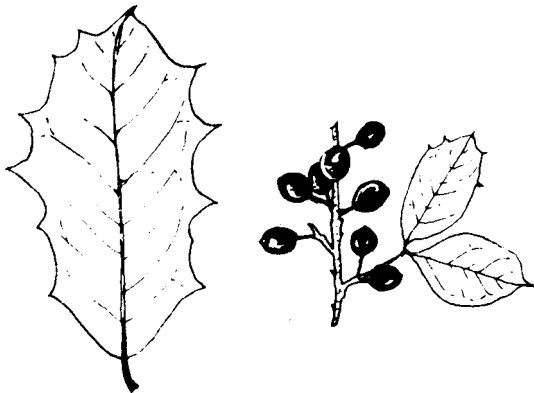
79. *Oxydendrum arboreum*
Sourwood



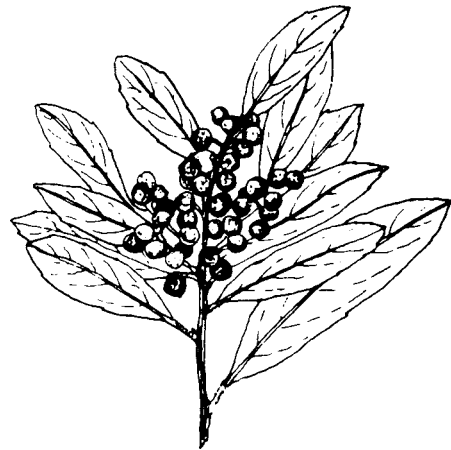
80. *Salix nigra*
Black Willow



81. *Salix interior*
Sandbar Willow

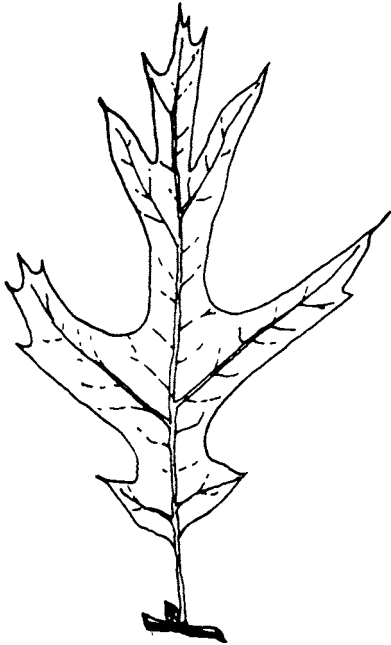


82. *Ilex opaca*
American Holly

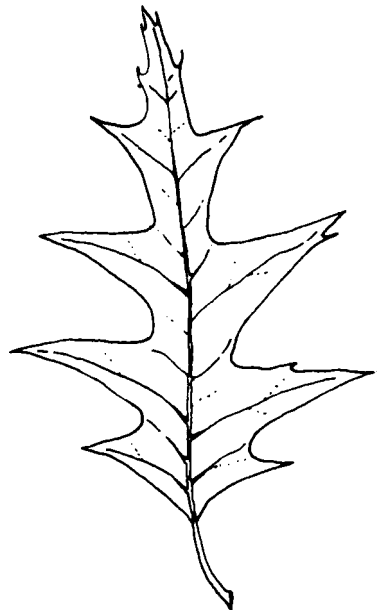


83. *Ilex cassine*
Cassine (dahoon)

Alternate, Simple, Lobed



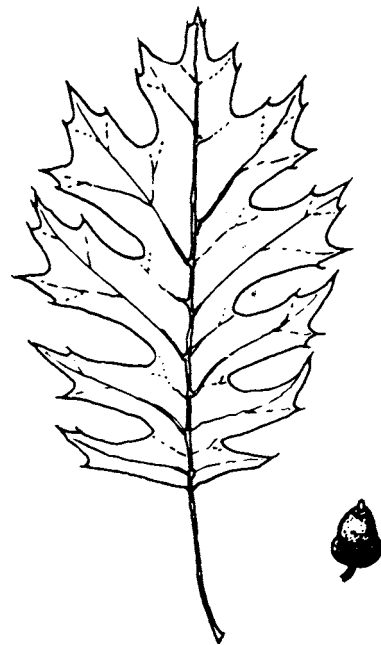
84. *Quercus falcata*
Southern Red Oak



85. *Quercus pagoda*
Cherrybark Oak

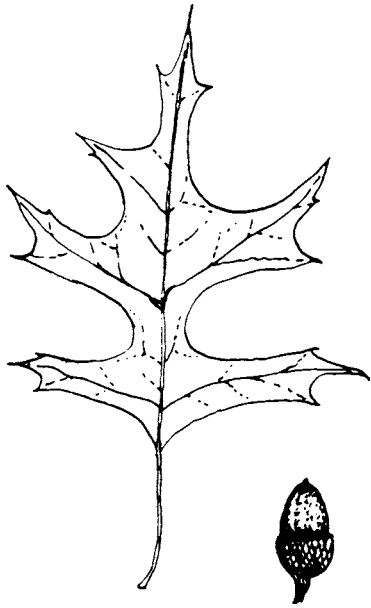


86. *Quercus velutina*
Black Oak

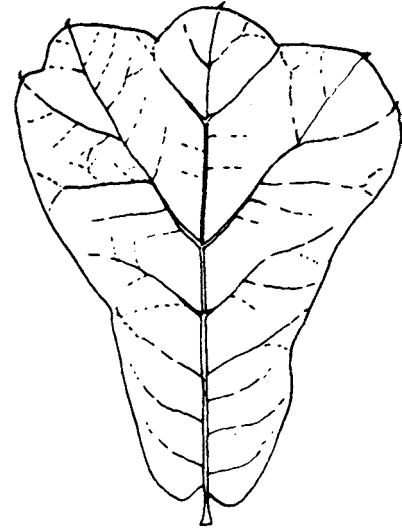


87. *Quercus shumardii*
Shumard Oak

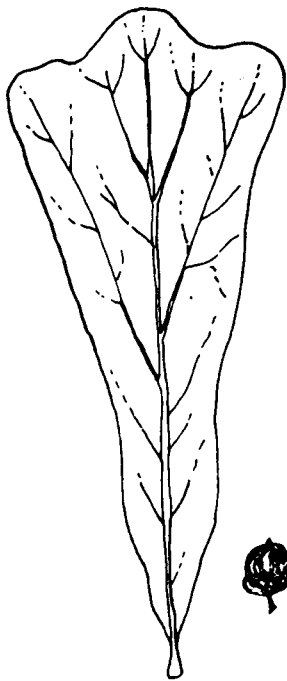
Alternate, Simple, Lobed



88. *Quercus buckleyi*
Nuttall Oak



89. *Quercus marilandica*
Blackjack Oak



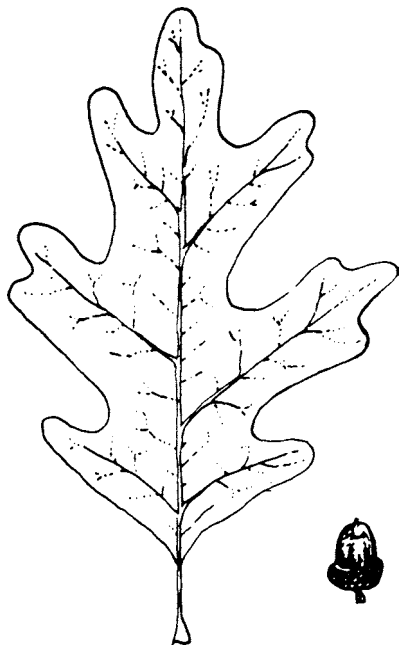
(large trees)



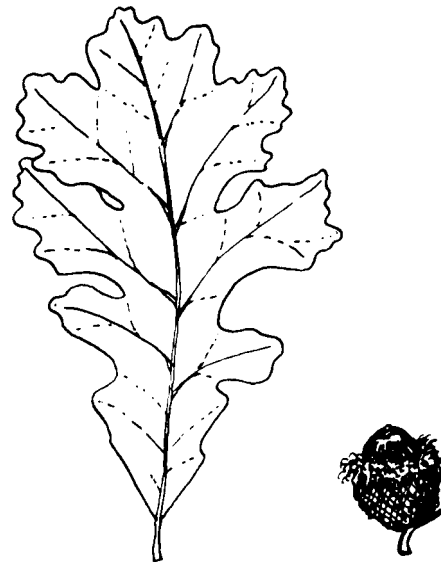
(Small trees)

90. *Quercus nigra*
Water Oak

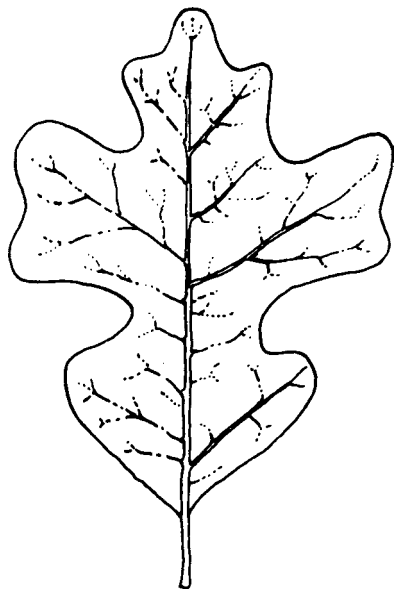
Alternate, Simple, Lobed



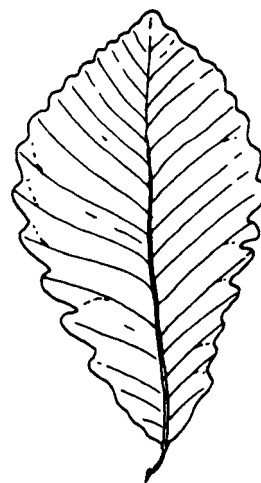
91. *Quercus alba*
White Oak



92. *Quercus macrocarpa*
Bur Oak

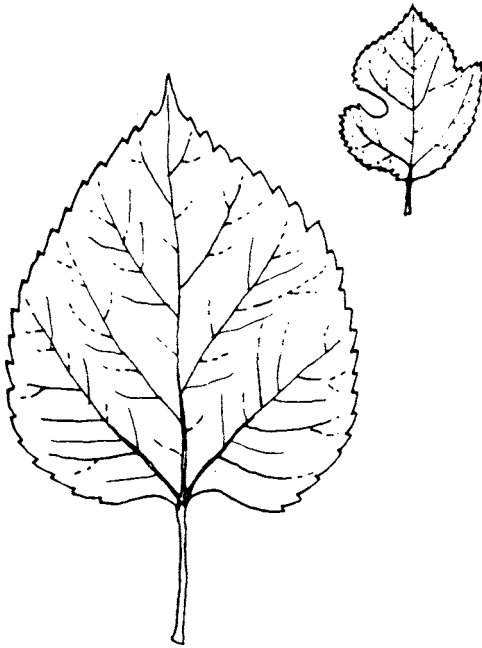


93. *Quercus stellata*
Post Oak

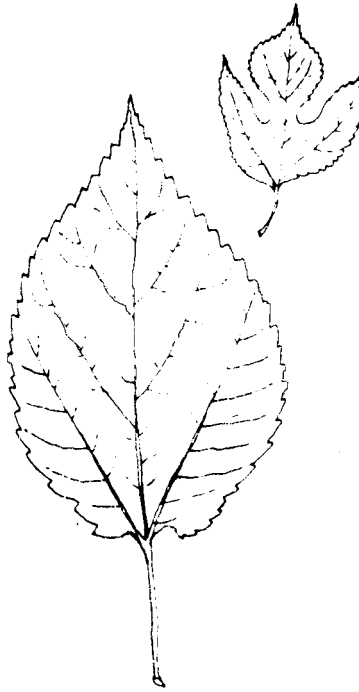


94. *Quercus michauxii*
Cow Oak (Chestnut Oak)

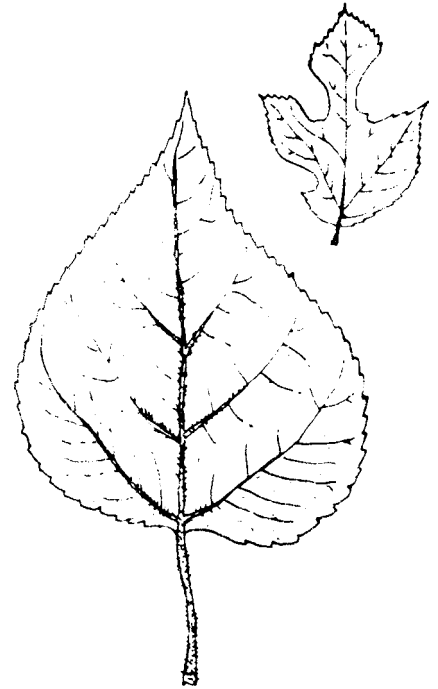
Alternate, Simple, Lobed



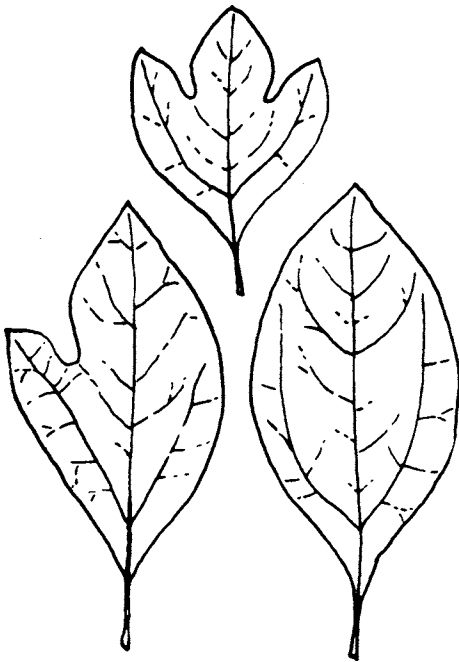
95. *Morus alba*
White Mulberry



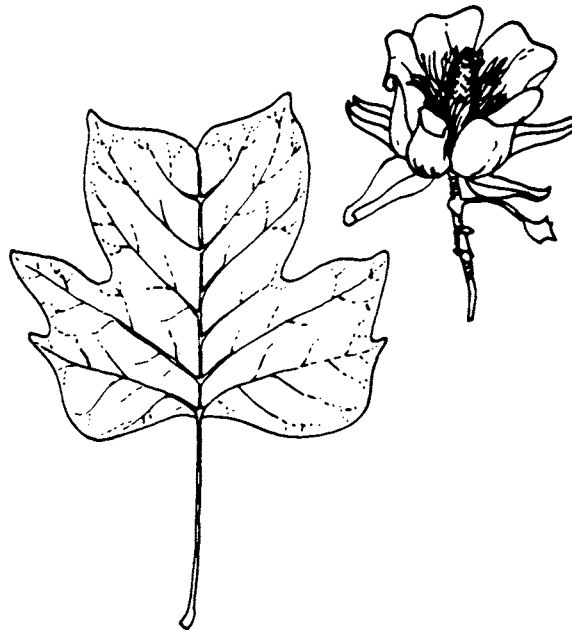
96. *Morus rubra*
Red Mulberry



97. *Broussonetia papyrifera*
Paper Mulberry



98. *Sassafras albidum*
Sassafras

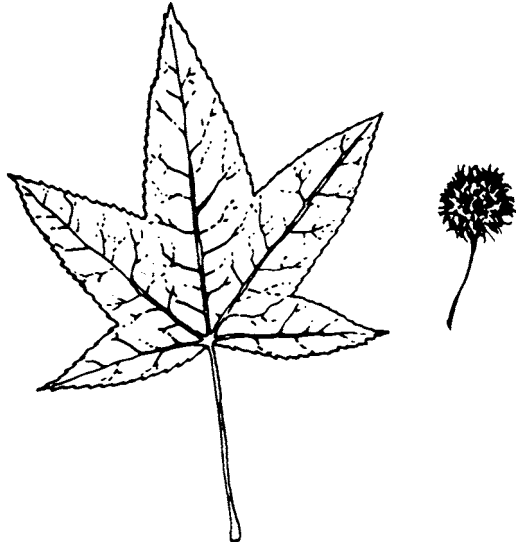


99. *Liriodendron tulipifera*
Tuliptree



100. *Platanus occidentalis*
Sycamore

Alternate, Simple, Lobed



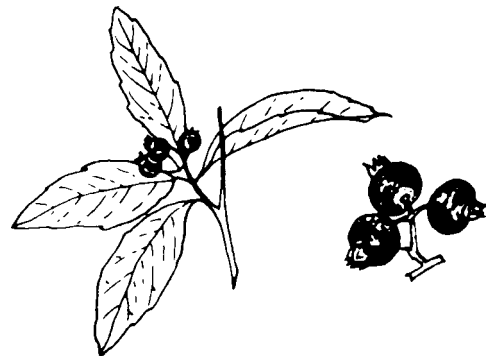
101. *Liquidambar styraciflua*
Sweetgum



102. *Crataegus marshallii*
Parsley Hawthorne



103. *Crataegus viridis*
Hog Haw (Green Haw)

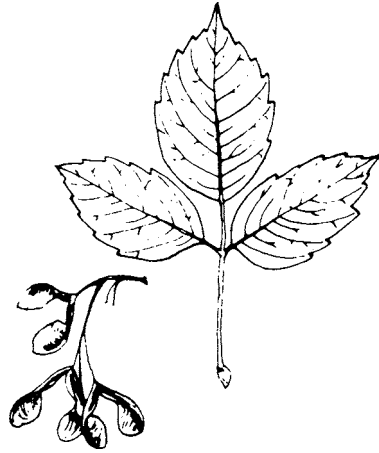


104. *Crataegus opaca*
May Haw

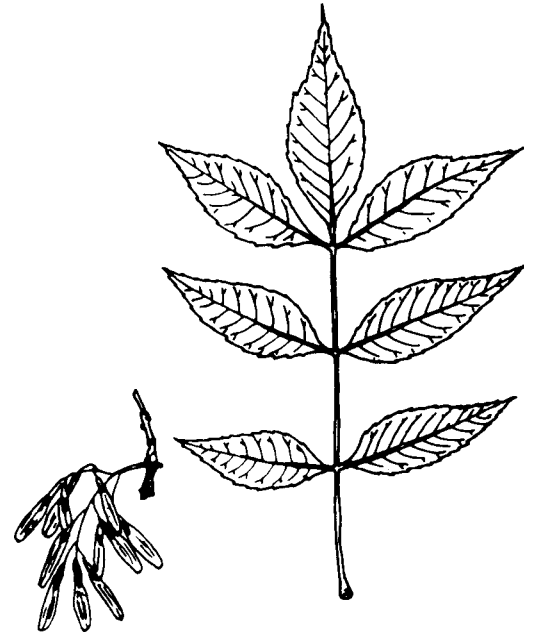
Opposite, Compound



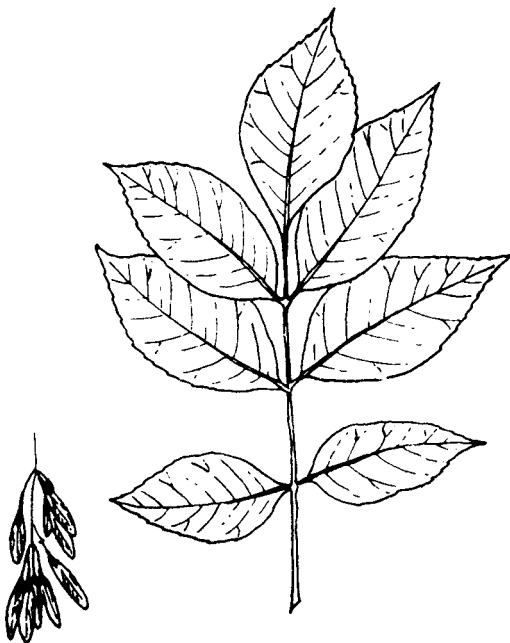
105. *Fraxinus americana*
White Ash



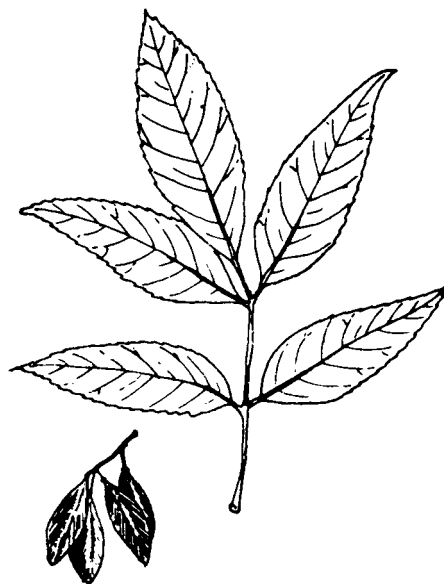
106. *Acer negundo*
Box Elder



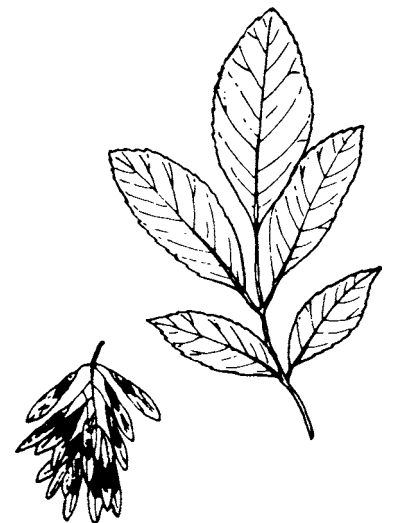
107. *Fraxinus pennsylvanica*
Green Ash



108. *Fraxinus profunda*
Pumpkin Ash

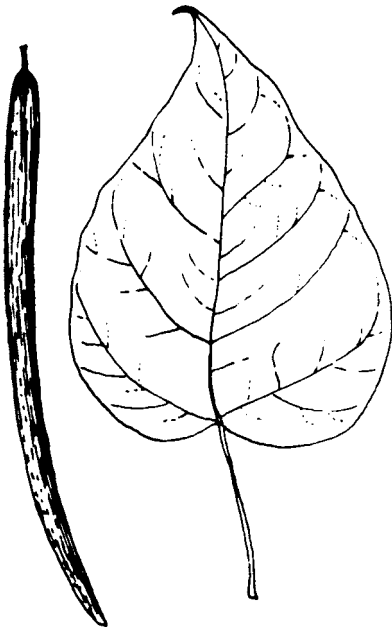


109. *Fraxinus caroliniana*
Water Ash

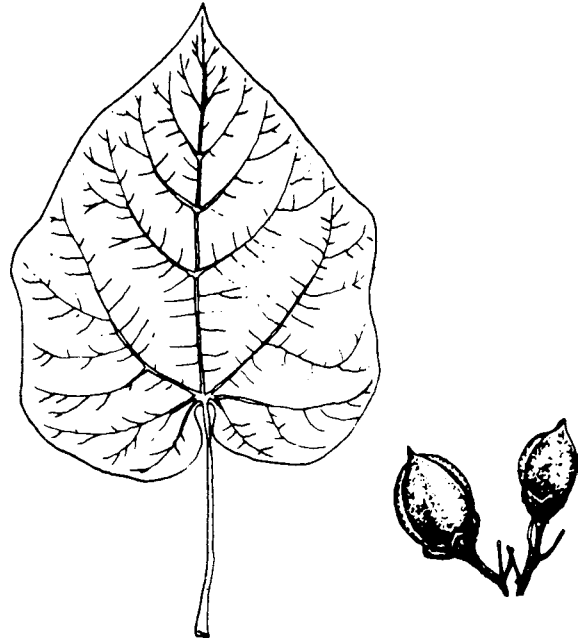


110. *Fraxinus berlandieriana*
Evergreen Ash
(Berlandier Ash)

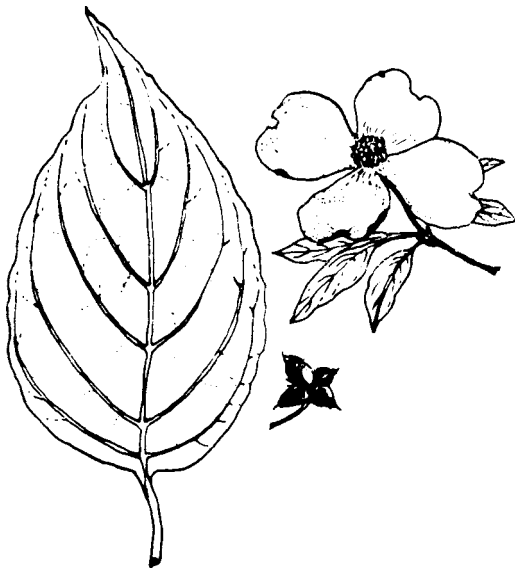
Opposite, Simple, Smooth



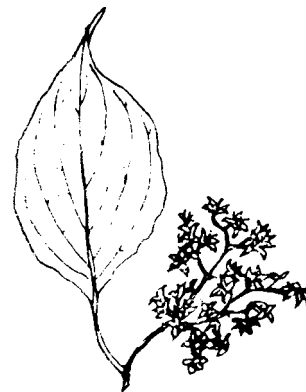
111. *Catalpa bignonioides*
Southern Catalpa



112. *Paulownia tomentosa**
Paulownia



113. *Cornus florida*
Flowering Dogwood

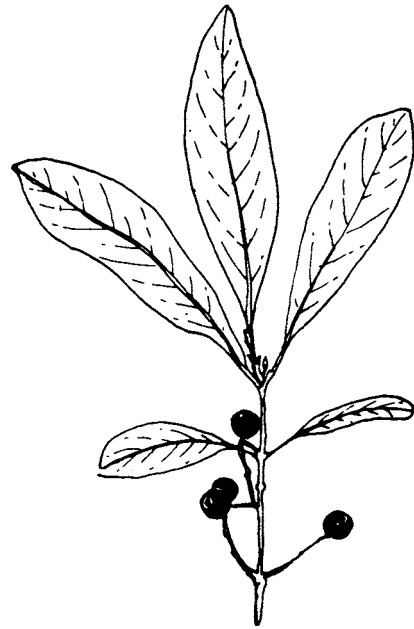


114. *Cornus drummondii*
Roughleaf Dogwood

Opposite, Simple, Smooth



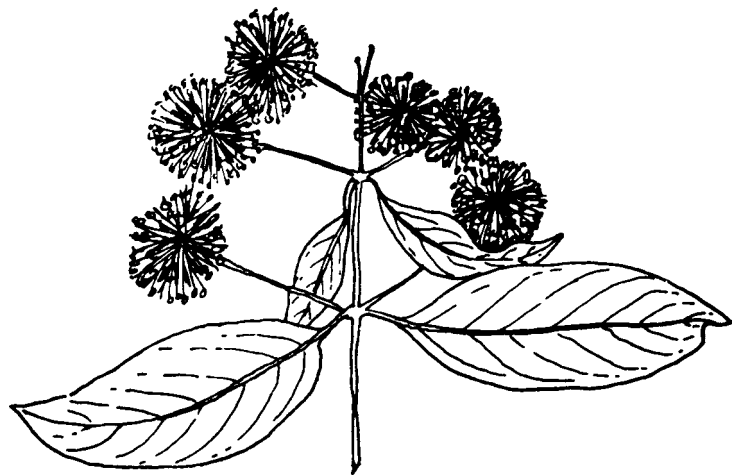
115. *Cornus foemina*
Bluefruited Dogwood
(stiffcornel dogwood)



116. *Osmanthus americanus*
Devilwood



117. *Chionanthus virginicus*
Fringetree

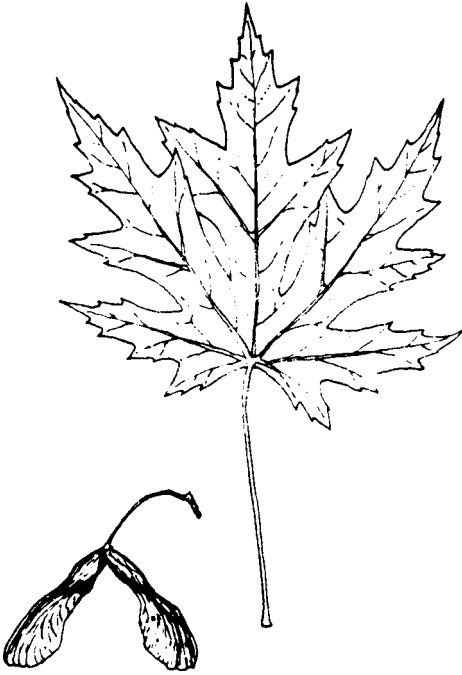


118. *Cephalanthus occidentalis*
Buttonbush

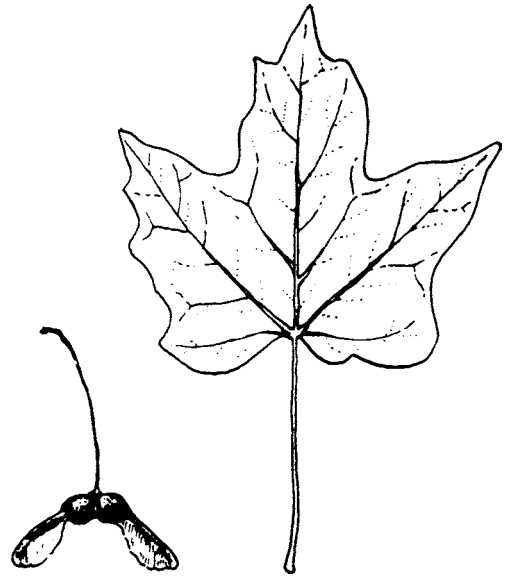


119. Viburnum rufidulum
Rusty Blackhaw

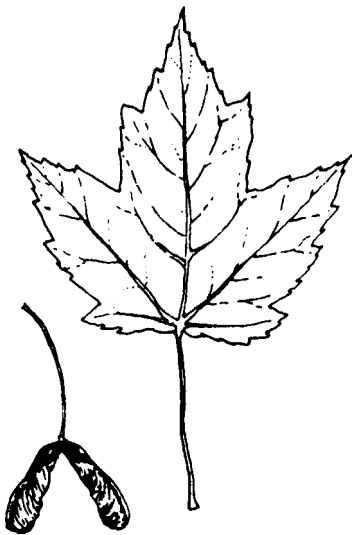
Opposite, Simple, Lobed



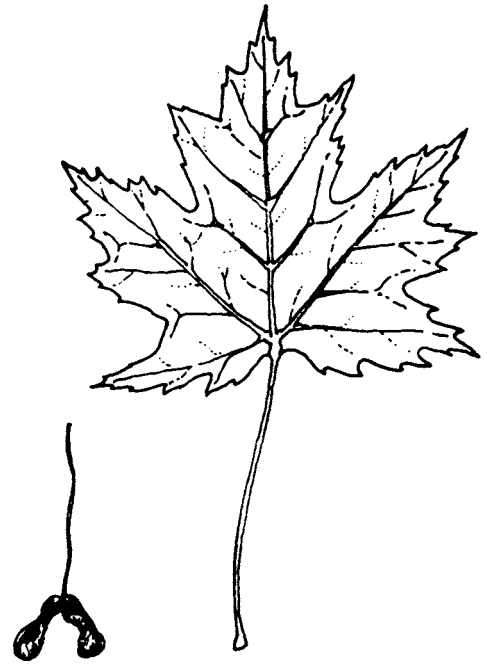
**120. *Acer saccharinum*
Silver Maple**



**121. *Acer saccharum*
Sugar Maple**

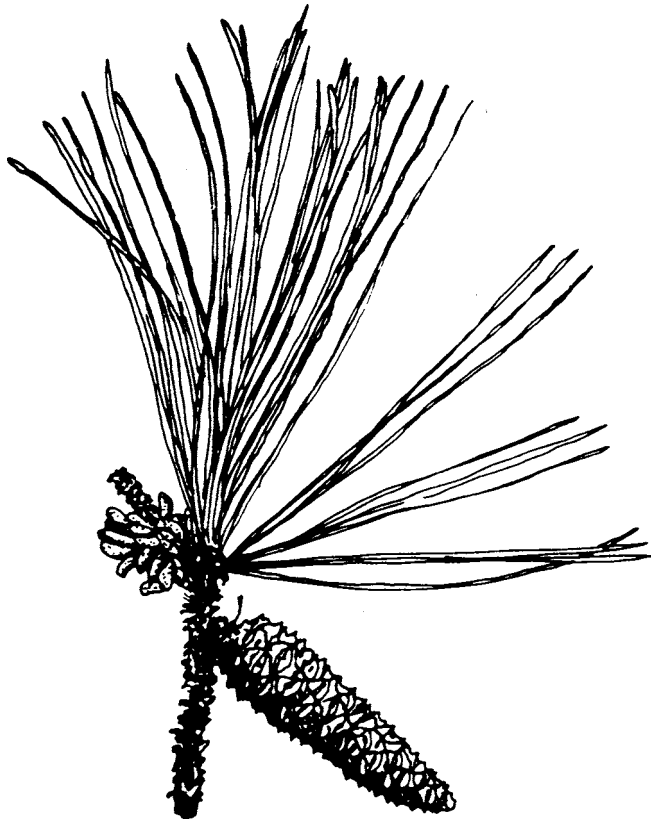


**122. *Acer rubrum* var. *drummondii*
Drummond Red Maple**

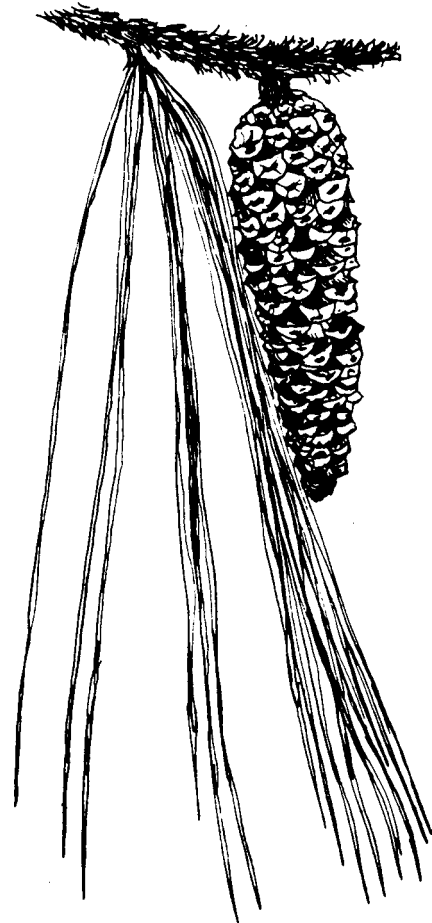


**123. *Acer rubrum*
Red Maple**

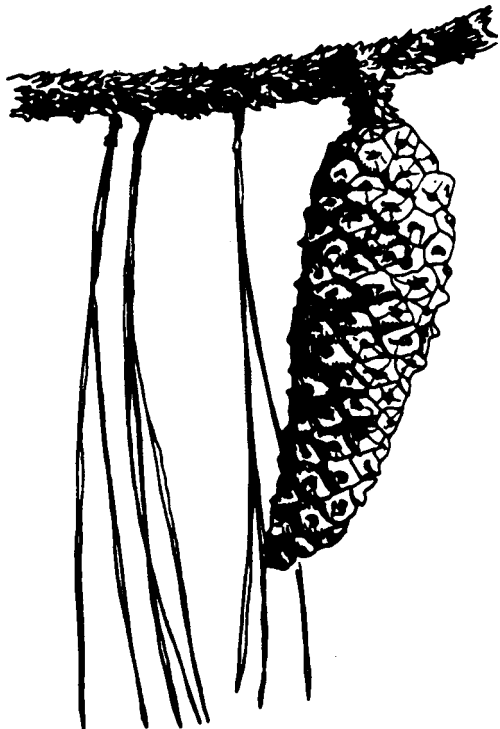
Leaves Needle-like



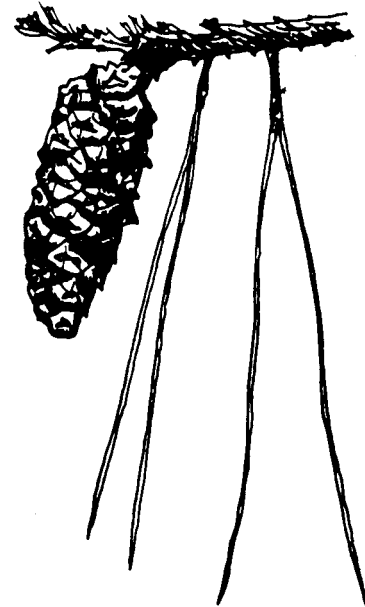
124. *Pinus taeda*
Loblolly Pine



125. *Pinus palustris*
Longleaf Pine

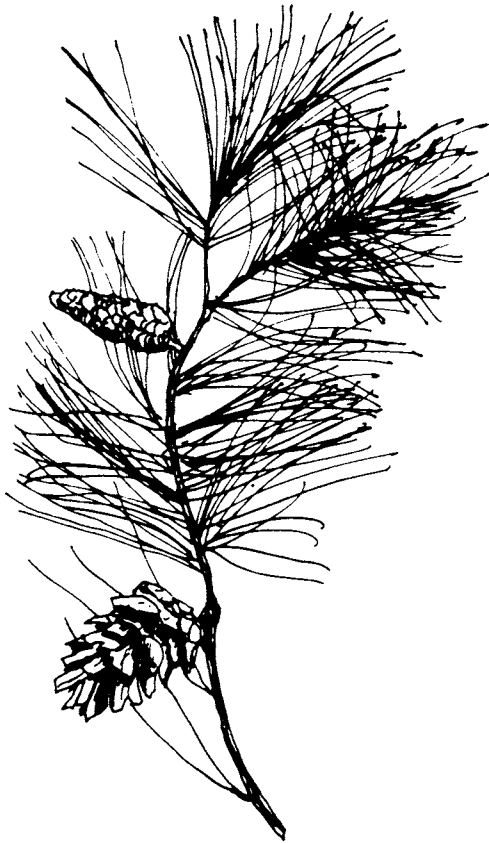


126. *Pinus elliottii*
Slash Pine

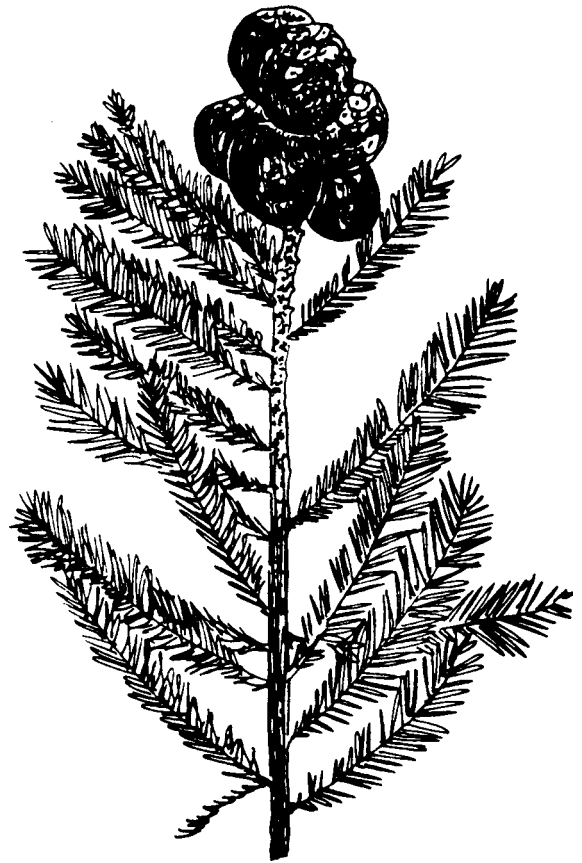


127. *Pinus echinata*
Shortleaf Pine

Leaves Needle-like



128. *Pinus glabra*
Spruce Pine



129. *Taxodium distichum*
Bald Cypress

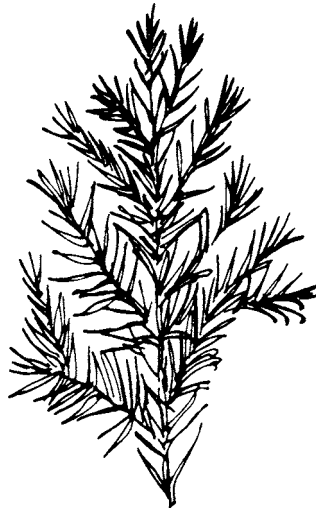


130. *Taxodium ascendens*
Pond Cypress

Leaves Scale-like

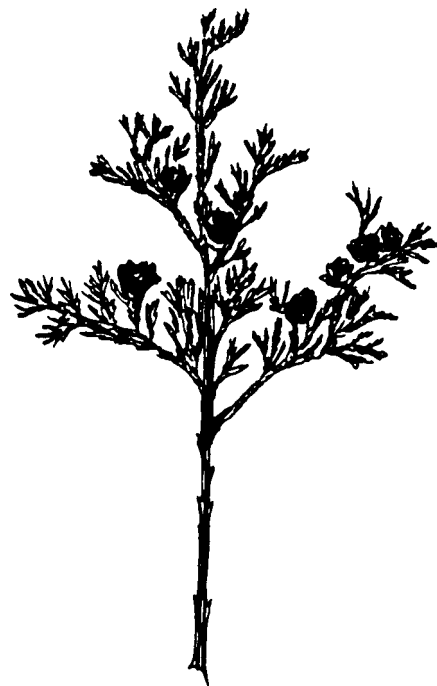


(older tree)



(young tree)

131. *Juniperus virginiana*
Red Cedar



132. *Chamaecyparis thyoides*
Southern White Cedar

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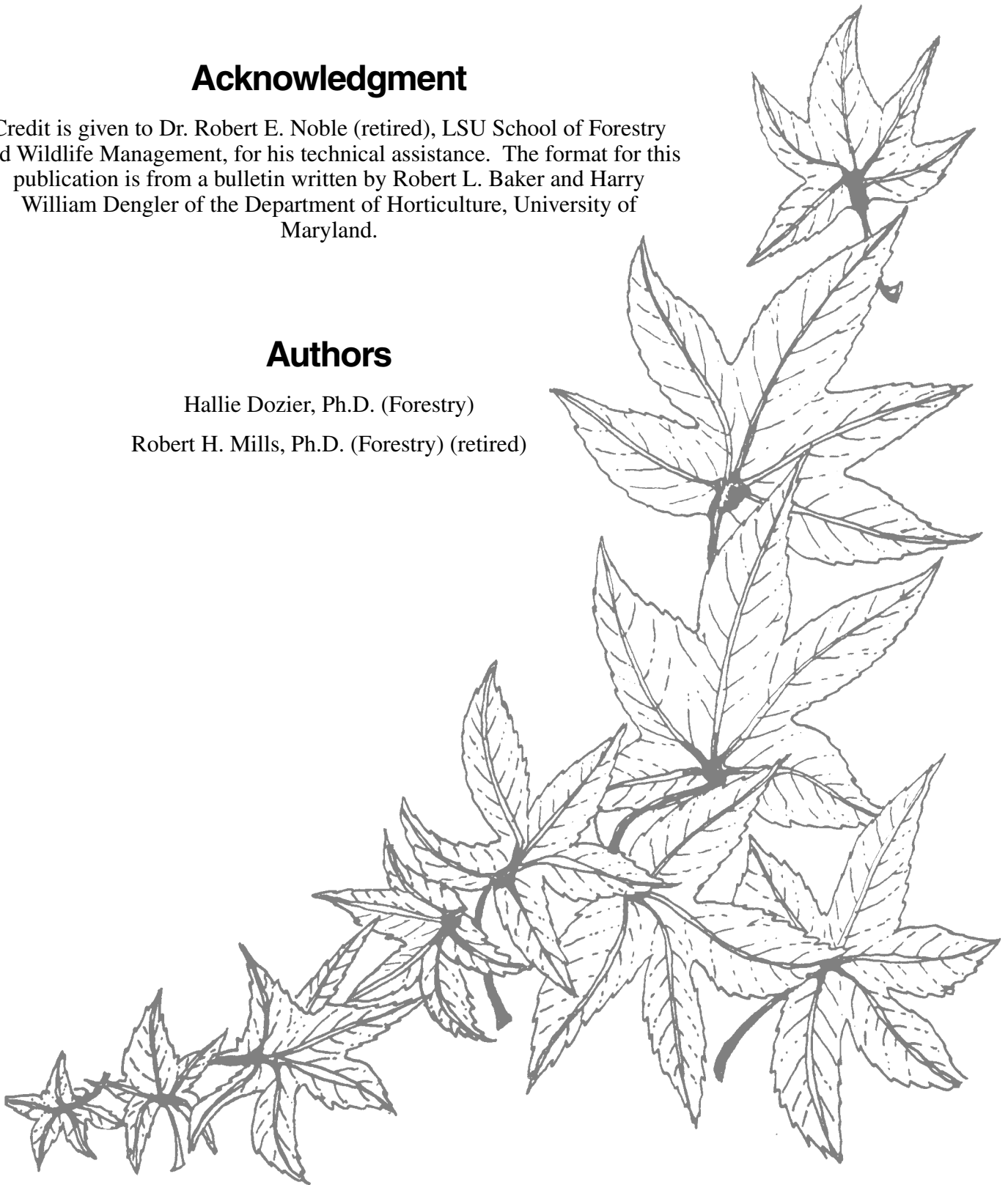
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