

# Foraging for Wild Edibles: *Hickory Nuts*



Photo credit:

<http://www.seriousseats.com/2013/10/foraged-flavor-wild-hickory-nuts.html>



Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*) and Pignut Hickory (*Carya glabra*)

# Foraging for Wild Edibles



## Why forage?

Foraging feeds us – literally and figuratively. Foraging helps to fill our freezer and pantry without us planting seeds or spending dollars.

Foraging helps us to better understand the earth and more about our sense of place on it.

Foraging anchors us in the season – it helps us to be mindful of the now.

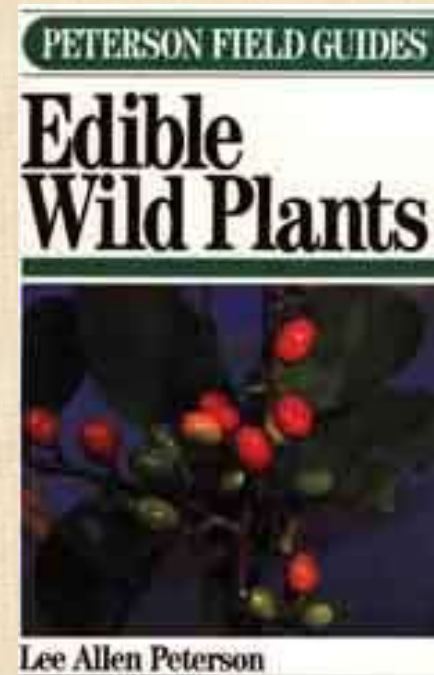
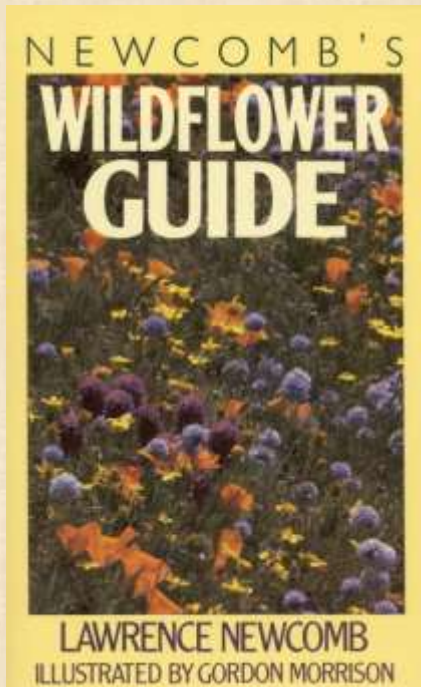
# Foraging for Wild Edibles:

## Tips for Responsible Foraging – Know your plants



*Newcomb's Wildflower Guide,*  
by Lawrence Newcomb

*A Field Guide to Edible Wild Plants of  
Eastern and Central North America,*  
by Lee Peterson

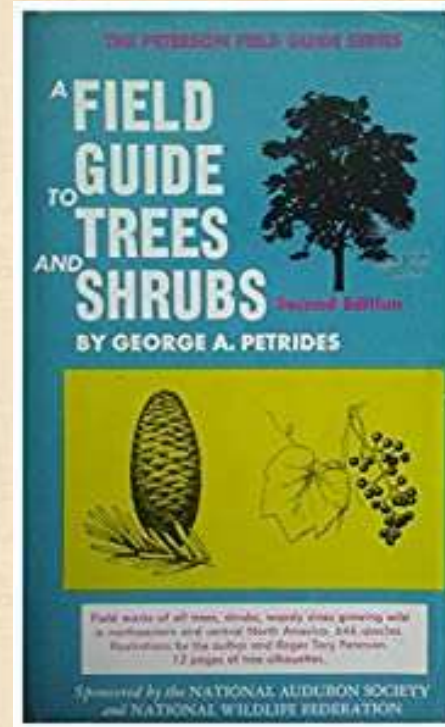
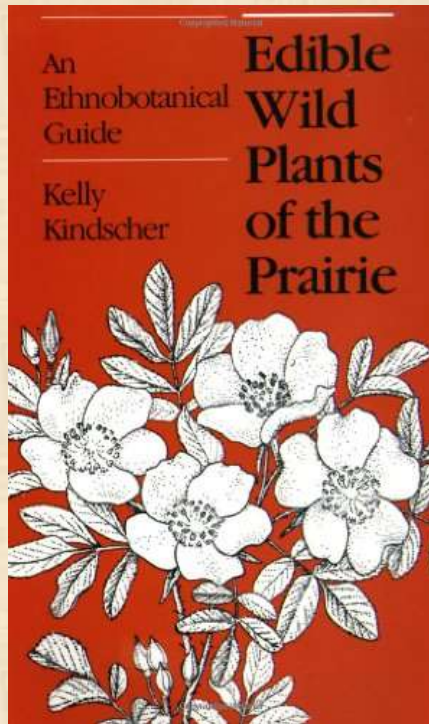


# Foraging for Wild Edibles: Tips for Responsible Foraging – Know your plants



*Edible Wild Plants of the Prairie:  
An Ethnobotanical Guide,*  
by Kelly Kindscher

*A Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs,*  
by George A. Petrides



## Foraging for Wild Edibles: Tips for Responsible Foraging



- Verify that foraging is allowed at the site. For example, most nature preserves prohibit the removal of plants and plant parts.
- Consider your site's management – evidence of use of chemicals, mowing frequency, etc.
- Don't overharvest native species – please follow the “one-in-twenty” rule: harvest 5% of what you find.



For invasive species, *eat them all!*



# Foraging for Wild Edibles: Forager's Oath *by Matt Suwak*



“I’ll only eat what I sure know,  
Have respect for things that grow.  
I’ll watch my step and never litter,  
Enjoy the sun and ignore Twitter.

I’ll only eat my fair share,  
Leaving most for bird and bear.  
I’ll open up while I am picking,  
And feel full when I’m quitting.

I’ll teach and be encouraging,  
When I go a-foraging.”

## Unnamed 41-acre property along Mohawk River:

Enter driveway (orange) off Riverview Road to small parking lot. Walk past gate along red route, then look for the targeted species within the purple area. You will find numerous trees scattered throughout this portion of the property.



# Hickory Nuts



As a “thank you” to each of you for joining me today, I will be happy to provide you with information from this presentation, including:

- ❖ plant ID tips,
- ❖ curious anecdotes,
- ❖ recipes, and
- ❖ a map showing where to find the targeted species discussed today.

If interested, please send your email request to:

[dave@curiousbynature.mysite.com](mailto:dave@curiousbynature.mysite.com)

However, you must send your email request before the end of this presentation. *Now* would be a good time to do so.





# *Nutrition Information about Hickory Nuts*



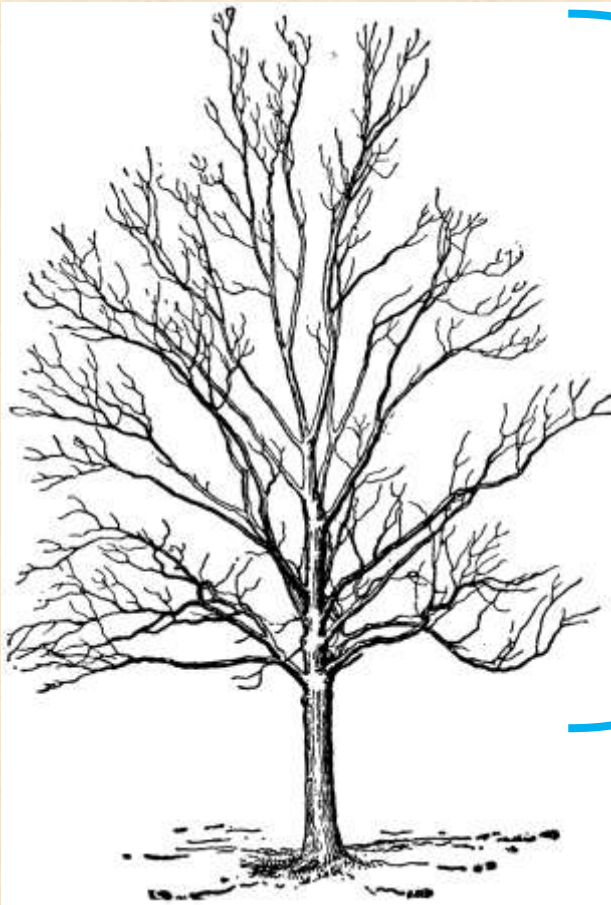
- Excellent source of dietary fiber, protein, manganese, copper, magnesium, zinc, and Thiamin.
- Hickory nutmeat is a high-energy food because it contains 66% oil.
- Rich source of mono- and polyunsaturated fats and contain a good amount of omega-6 and omega-3 fatty acids.

# How to Identify Hickories



# How to Identify Hickories

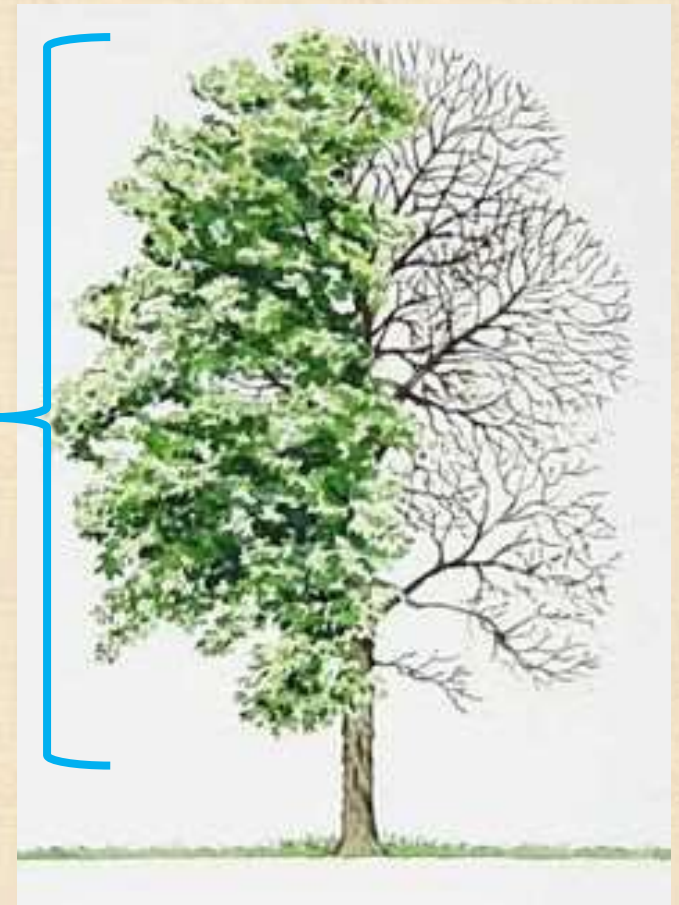
Dry woods



Pignut =  
Ascending to  
spreading  
branches

Shagbark =  
Upper branches  
ascending, middle  
branches widely  
spreading, and lower  
branches descending

Mature woods and fencerows



60-80' tall tree with single long straight trunk

Photo credits: (L) [https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/83800/83893/83893\\_carya\\_glabra.htm](https://etc.usf.edu/clipart/83800/83893/83893_carya_glabra.htm);

(R) [http://www.meridian.k12.il.us/middle%20school/student\\_work/joseph/Hickory\\_Tree.html](http://www.meridian.k12.il.us/middle%20school/student_work/joseph/Hickory_Tree.html)

# How to Identify Hickories



Photo credit: <https://www.carolinanature.com/trees/cagl.html>

Pignut =

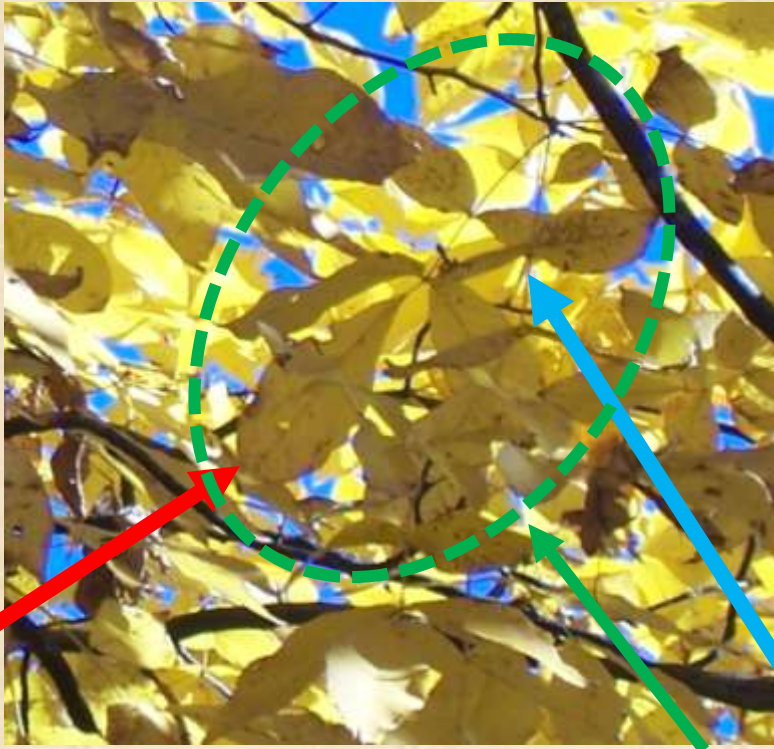
Trunk bark is gray to gray-brown and somewhat rough with elongated ridges that have flattened tops and shallow furrows



Shagbark =  
Trunk bark is light to medium gray, rough-textured, fissured, and shaggy from narrow plates that peel away from the trunk at their tips and/or bottoms

# How to Identify Shagbark Hickory

(Where found: Mature woods and fencerows)



Alternate pinnately compound leaves (8-14" long) with 5 leaflets; terminal leaflet is the largest, while the lowest lateral leaflets (first pair of a compound leaf) are the smallest; serrated along their margins

# How to Identify Pignut Hickory

(Where found: Dry woods)



Alternate pinnately compound leaves  
(8-12" long) with 5 leaflets;  
terminal and upper lateral leaflets are  
larger in size than the lower lateral  
leaflets;  
finely serrated along their margins

# How to Identify Shagbark Hickory

(Where found: Mature woods and fencerows)



Fruits ~ 1½-2" long & across

Thick hairless husks are light green while immature, becoming brownish black at maturity.

Husk divided into 4 segments that are indented at their margins, providing the fruit with a ribbed appearance.

The nut of each fruit is light tan and slightly 4-angled



# How to Identify Pignut Hickory

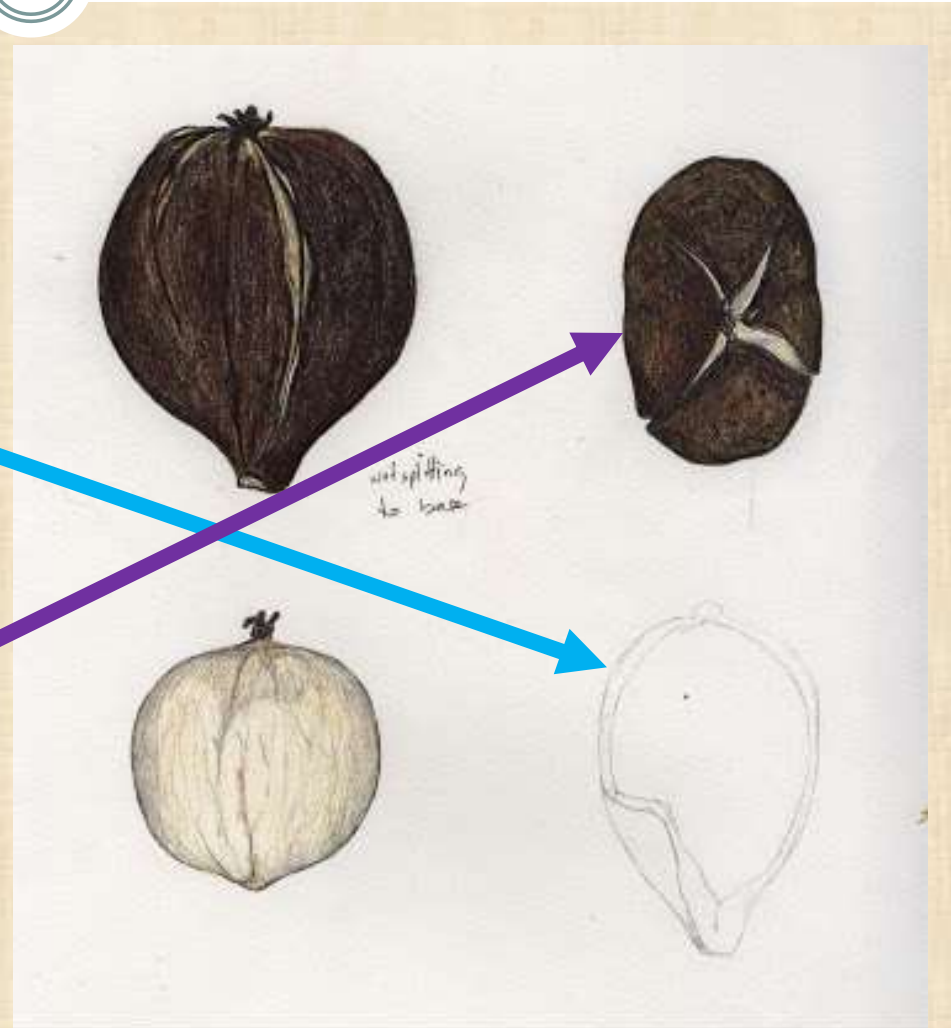
(Where found: Dry woods)



Fruits ~ 1" long and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " across and somewhat pear-shaped.

Husks are thin, smooth and hairless; comprised of four segments; initially green, but later turn brown.

Tan shell of the nut is ovoid and slightly flattened in shape





# How to Identify **Bitternut Hickory** (Where found: Woods)



While also edible, the nutmeat of this hickory is very bitter – best to avoid it.

Fruits about 1" long

Husks are thin and smooth with four narrow ridges that extend from outer tip for about one-half to two-thirds of the length of the fruit



# When to Harvest Hickory Nuts



***Ripe when shell is brown***  
(even if husk is green) –  
typically first week of  
October



# Tips for Picking Shagbark Hickory



Shagbark Hickory husks typically fall away from the shells on their own; you will often find huskless shells lying on the ground beneath the tree.



Photo credit:

<https://www.tyrantfarms.com/recipe-how-to-make-hickory-nut-ambrosia/>

# Tips for Picking Pignut Hickory



Pignut Hickory husks nearly always must be peeled from the shell.

Let the husk-covered nuts dry for a couple of weeks; then use a pocket knife to simply peel off each of the four segments from the shell.



Photo credit:

<http://sustainablelivingideas.com/pig-nuts-and-how-to-eat-them.html>

# Tips for Picking Hickory Nuts



Take along a sturdy canvas bag or plastic pail with handle to carry while you collect your harvest of fallen hickory nuts.



# Tips for Processing Hickory Nuts



After husks are removed, put all nuts (still in shell) into a sink filled with 2-3" of water and immediately remove any floaters.



Floaters will contain either:  
(1) air because of an undeveloped seed (i.e., empty shell), or  
(2) larva of Nut Weevil (*Curculio occidentis*) feasting on the seed.



# Tips for Processing Hickory Nuts



Let your husked harvest air dry for at least a couple of weeks before cracking the shells open – doing so will help ensure the nut separates easily from the shell when you crack them open.

# Tips for Processing Hickory Nuts



Let your husked harvest air dry for at least a couple of weeks before cracking the shells open – doing so will help ensure the nut separates easily from the shell when you crack them open.



Cast iron handle

Mounted on hickory board



# Tips for Processing Hickory Nuts



Yield (far right) of  
nut meats after two  
hours of cracking



Darkened nutmeat =  
discard it

# Tips for Storing and Using Fresh Hickory Nuts



Store shelled hickory nuts in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to two months.

# Tips for Storing and Using Frozen Hickory Nuts



Store shelled hickory nuts in an airtight container, where they will stay fresh and flavorful for up to one year in the freezer.

# *Culinary Uses for Hickory Nuts*



One pound of shelled hickory nuts will yield ~1/2 cup.

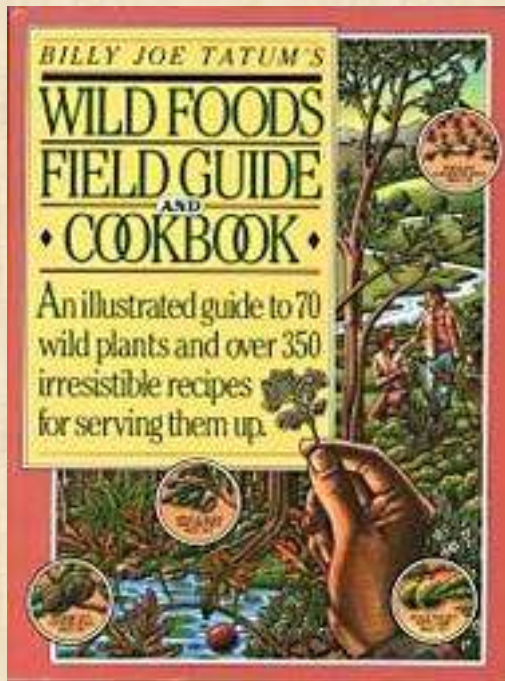
Hickory nuts can be used in these culinary applications:

- ❖ fresh raw nuts or roasted nuts or candied nuts as a snack,
- ❖ nut butter,
- ❖ ice cream (*using the bark!*),
- ❖ in baked deserts, including cakes, cookies, and pies,
- ❖ candy, and
- ❖ nut broth in savory dishes.

# Foraging for Wild Edibles: Recipe Resources

*Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook,*  
by Billy Joe Tatum

[www.wildmanstevebrill.com/cooking](http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/cooking)



STEVE BRILL

## Wild (and not-so-wild) Recipes



More of my recipes: [Cooking for](#)

[Acorns - Bean Preparation](#)

[Acorns - Bean Tostitos](#)

[Almond Bites, Crunchy](#)

[Apple and Wildwood Pie](#)

[Autumn Olive Berry Jam](#)

[Bannocks \(Sweet & Yeast\)](#)

[Beach Plum Confit](#)

[Beach Plum Jam](#)

[Baked Wild Flour Pie](#)

[Blackberry Dimples](#)

[Blackberry Pancakes](#)

[Blackberry Pie \(Sweet\)](#)

# Hickory Nuts



***Last call!***

If you'd like the information from this presentation (including recipes), please send your email request *now* to:

[dave@curiousbynature.mysite.com](mailto:dave@curiousbynature.mysite.com)

Thank you!

Be well.



# *SAVE the dates!*



Join me for the series finale of *Foraging for Wild Edibles* –

- Tomorrow (October 4) @ 1pm: *Autumnberries*

Please check the [Events page of my blog](#) for details and any updates on each upcoming event:

[www.curiousbynature.wordpress.com](http://www.curiousbynature.wordpress.com).

# THE END

