

# Black Walnut

*Juglans nigra*

American Walnut

Black walnut is a very scarce and coveted timber species and the heartwood is of superior quality and value, not to mention that it is one of the most beautiful of trees. This distinctive tasting nuts are used primarily in baking and in ice cream. A number of herbal remedies continue to be concocted from leaves, husks, and bark. Even the nut shells are valuable - they are ground and used as polishing agents. Black Walnut is antagonistic to many other plants attributed to juglone, a toxic substance found in its leaves, bark, and roots. Apples are particularly sensitive. Juglone is being studied as a potential cancer therapy. Nut kernels are especially prized by wildlife. Genetic variation is broad; more than 400 Black Walnut cultivars have been named. The husks have a very pleasant and fresh aroma. Black Walnut is the primary nut and timber tree of Orion Farms.



## Identification

### Leaves

Deciduous, alternate, pinnately compound 12-24 inches with 10-24 leaflets about 3 inches each.



### Bark/Wood

Bark light brown on surface, darker brown when cut, ridged and furrowed with a rough diamond pattern. Rich, deeply colored brown wood.



### Flower/Fruit

Monoecious, asymmetrical maturation: male catkins, female on short spikes April-June. Nut hard shelled, spherical, surrounded by thick green husk.



### Form

Medium sized tree developing a straight bole under competition, spreading in open. Deep tap root. Stout branches.



### Uses

All elements of the Black Walnut tree are valued: nuts for baked goods and ice cream; wood for furniture, gun stocks, and veneers; ground shells for industrial polishing; and husks for pre-emergent herbicide and herbal remedies.

### Ethnobotany

Native Americans used inner bark to brew a laxative tea. Nut husks were used to treat colic and made poultice for inflammation treatment. They chewed the bark for toothaches. Homesteaders to Oregon planted specimens near their homes for food.

### Native Distribution

Small groves in mixed hardwood forests from mid Atlantic states south to nearly the Gulf Coast.

### Establishment

Often hybridized with *J. hindsii* for increased vigor. Intolerant of competition. Requires weed control.

## Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size 100'H x 50'W x 8'dbh  
 USDA Zone 5-9  
 Light Requirements Full sun

Soils Neutral, well drained  
 Drought Tolerant? No  
 Inundation Tolerant? No

### Pests/Damaging Agents

Walnut anthracnose, a fungal infection, attacks the foliage. Collect and discard leaves. Walnut husk fly is generally a nuisance, but infestations can damage nutmeats.

### Similar Species

Butternut  
 Butternut bark is gray rather than brown. Butternut has fewer leaflets and hairy leaf scar. Black walnuts are spherical while Butternuts are oblong and have pointed ends.

### Propagation

Seed - cold stratify 90-120 days.

### Source(s)

Seed from Alex Bay, NY; Cornell Plantation, NY; Corvallis, OR; others. Transplants Molalla, OR.