

# Butternut

*Juglans cinerea*

## STATUS

Not Listed



Not Listed



Endangered



Not Listed



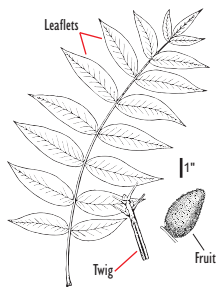
Not Listed



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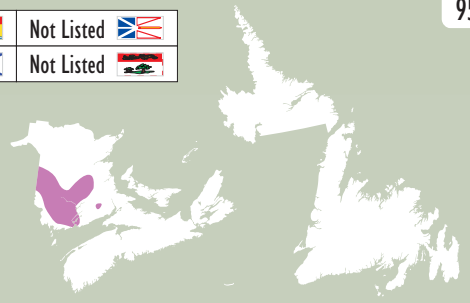
## Species Description

Butternut is a deciduous tree belonging to the walnut family that typically reaches heights of 15-25 m and a diameter of 30-75 cm. Leaves (9-15 cm long) composed of 11-17 leaflets (each 5-10 cm long), alternate along the twigs, and densely hairy underneath. Bark light gray becoming irregularly ridged. Fruit olive green, lemon-shaped, densely hairy and sticky, and about 5-8 cm long. For winter identification, thick, alternate-branching twigs are key.



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Distributed across much of temperate northeastern North America; known to occur in western, central, and southern New Brunswick.



## Habitat

Butternut is shade-intolerant and grows in rich and moist but seasonally well-drained sites like stream banks and hardwood slopes, never being found in regions of strongly acidic soils. It is largely restricted to floodplains and floodplain edges in New Brunswick except in areas with strongly basic, limestone-derived soils (mostly in western NB). It generally occurs in deciduous-dominated stands.



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In New Brunswick, the Butternut is mainly observed along the Saint John River, with somewhat disjunct populations along the Southwest Miramichi River and near Havelock.

## Interesting Points

- Butternut typically lives for about 75 years and sometimes up to 150 years.
- The fruits are a good food source for squirrels, birds, other rodents, and humans too.
- Butternut is among the last trees to leaf out in the spring. This can help to identify it.



© LEAN BLANEY  
Butternut leaves



© JOHN MAUNDER  
Hairy fruits

## Similar Species

### Black Ash:

Fewer leaflets (7-11); opposite leaves and branching pattern; leaves hairless underneath; bark corky and easily indented by fingernail; seeds small, flat, and winged.



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### White Ash:

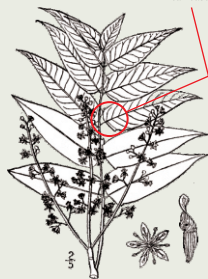
Fewer leaflets (5-9); leaves mostly hairless; opposite leaves and branching pattern; bark furrowed with regular diamond pattern; seeds small, flat, and winged.



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### Tree of Heaven:

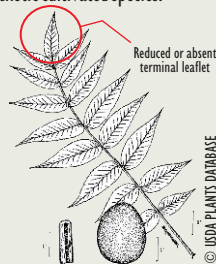
Leaflets with a lobe or tooth near base; bark thin, greenish-gray. A cultivated species; found near settlements.



© BRITTON AND BROWN (1913)

### Black Walnut (and most other walnuts):

Terminal leaflet smaller or missing; underside of leaves only slightly hairy; bark generally darker brown; nuts spherical, with hairless outer husk and strong citrus scent. These are exotic cultivated species.



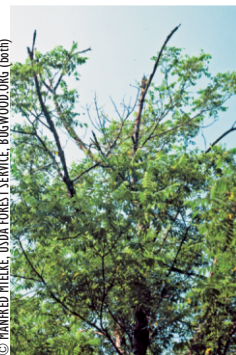
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## Threats to Survival

- The principal threat is from Butternut Canker, an exotic fungal disease that was first identified in North America in the 1960s. Any Butternut tree can become infected, and these typically develop cankers under the bark, which quickly strangles and kills the tree. It has infected millions of Butternut trees and threatens the viability of this species.
- Floodplain and rich upland habitat in NB has been highly altered for agriculture and settlement, and continues to be lost.



Cankers on a Butternut



© MANFRED MUELE, USDA FOREST SERVICE, BUGWOOD.ORG (both)  
Dying Butternut due to canker

## How You Can Help

Learn how to identify Butternut and report healthy, possibly immune, trees. Stay informed about Butternut and any new discoveries regarding its status. Reduce the likelihood of introducing invasive alien species by spreading the word about their negative impacts.

## Contacts, Information, Sighting Reports & Stewardship Opportunities

**Contact:** NB DNR (506) 453-3826, or AC CDC (506) 364-2658  
**Info:** [www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca](http://www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca), [www.cosewic.gc.ca](http://www.cosewic.gc.ca)