

# Cherokee Ethnobiology

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## BLACK WALNUT

### Cherokee Usage

Black Walnut has been used by Cherokees for many generations. The nuts, although very hard to crack open, are very tasty and nutritious. Walnuts were often used as a substitute for the hickory nut in making kenuche, some even preferring walnut kenuche to the traditional hickory nut variety (claiming it to be tastier and richer). A brown dye can be made from the hull that covers the nut. The nut hulls were also used in crafting chemicals for stunning fish. Cherokees use the wood in making the long handles for fish gigs. The walnut tree is a very popular timber/lumber tree (often the wood of choice for gunstocks). The tree shown above, located on the Northeastern State University Campus, is reported to predate the college and to actually have been growing on site before the Cherokee Female Seminary was built in 1851. These trees can live up to 250 years.

### Description

A tall tree, growing to 60 to 70 feet in height and up to 4 feet in diameter. It has large leaves that are pinnately compound with 9 to 21 stalkless, finely toothed leaflets that are broadly lance-shaped. The bark is rough and contains many “X-shaped” marks which aid in identification. The wood is a dark chocolate brown. Squirrels and other wildlife utilize the nuts as an important food source.

<b>Where found:</b>	The black walnut mainly grows in bottomland flood plains, but can also be found on hilltops where the seeds were most likely planted by squirrels.
<b>Other Name:</b>	Walnut
<b>Taxonomy:</b>	Kingdom - Plantae Phylum - Magnoliophyta Class - Magnoliopsida Order – Fagales Family – Juglandaceae Genus — <i>Juglans</i> Species — <i>nigra</i>

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