**INTRODUCTION**

A North American native, Pignut Hickory is usually seen at 50 to 65 feet in height with a 30 to 40-foot-spread but is capable of slowly reaching 120 feet in the forest (Fig. 1). The deciduous, 6 to 12-inch-long leaves create a coarse, oval canopy, and the strong but irregularly-spaced branches resist breakage in storms, making it useful as a shade tree. The green fruits are quite bitter and are popular with various forms of wildlife, but not man. Since fruits may damage cars as they fall and people could roll on the fruit and lose their balance, it may be best to locate the tree away from streets, parking lots and other areas where cars regularly park. It makes a nice shade tree or median strip tree planted on 25 to 30-foot-centers and turns a striking bright yellow in the fall.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Carya glabra*
**Pronunciation:** KAIR-ee-uh GLAY-bruh
**Common name(s):** Pignut Hickory
**Family:** Juglandaceae
**USDA hardness zones:** 5 through 9 (Fig. 2)
**Origin:** native to North America
**Uses:** shade tree; specimen
**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 50 to 65 feet
**Spread:** 30 to 40 feet
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
**Crown shape:** oval

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-121, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.

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Carya glabra -- Pignut Hickory

Crown density: dense
Growth rate: medium
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: odd pinnately compound
Leaflet margin: serrate
Leaflet shape: lanceolate; obovate
Leaflet venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaflet blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: yellow
Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval; round
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown; green
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; suited for human consumption; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
Pruning requirement: needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thick
Wood specific gravity: 0.75
Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate
Soil salt tolerance: poor

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: no special winter interest
Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Ozone sensitivity: tolerant
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Hickory generally grows with one central leader, and branches are well-spaced, forming a strong, wide angle with the trunk. The tree lends a coarse texture to the landscape which contrasts nicely with the smaller-leaved trees, such as the evergreen oaks. This is an under-utilized native tree with potential for much wider use.

Pignut Hickory grows best in sun or partial shade on well-drained, acid soils and is very drought-tolerant. Trees will show minor-element deficiencies on alkaline soils. It grows well in sand or clay, sending deep roots down below the trunk in well-drained soil. Hickory wood is versatile and is used for chair legs, tool handles, including axes and hammers, and for smoking meat and fish.

Propagation is by stratified seed or root-sprouts.

Pests

Borers, bagworms, and fall webworms but none are normally serious. Fall webworms can devour large quantities of foliage during the summer and fall but they cause no lasting damage and control is not needed. Galls are common on the leaves but cause no real damage.

Hickory bark beetle is a problem, particularly during droughts.

Diseases

Scab.