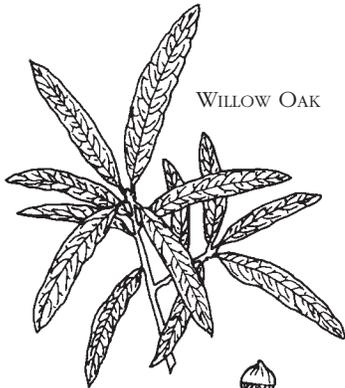


EASTERN COTTONWOOD



WILLOW OAK



BLACKJACK OAK



VIRGINIA PINE



WINGED ELM



POST OAK



HONEYLOCUST

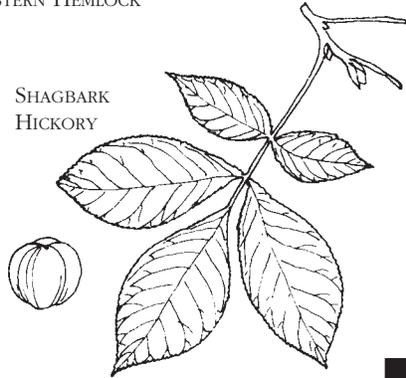


EASTERN HEMLOCK



WATER OAK

SHAGBARK HICKORY



BITTERNUT HICKORY



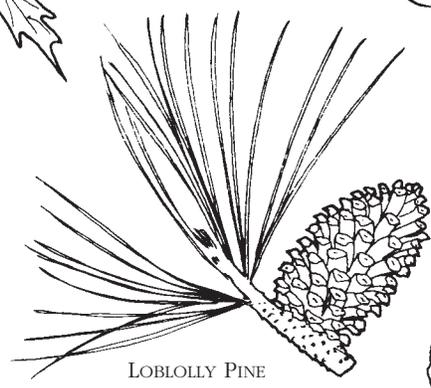
SILVER MAPLE



A Key to Common Trees of Alabama

ANR-0509

LOBLOLLY PINE



SHORTLEAF PINE

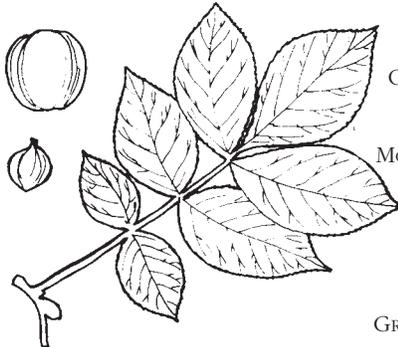


COMMON PERSIMMON

CUCUMBERTREE



MOCKERNUT HICKORY

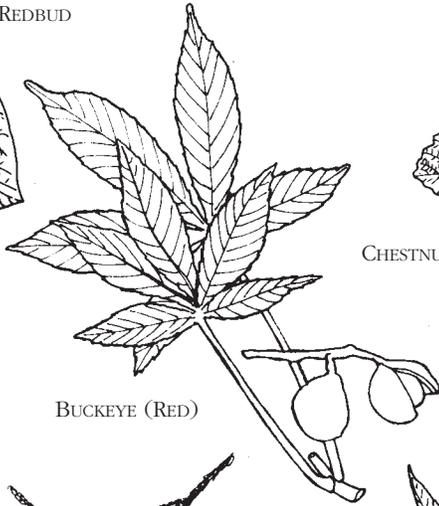


GREEN ASH

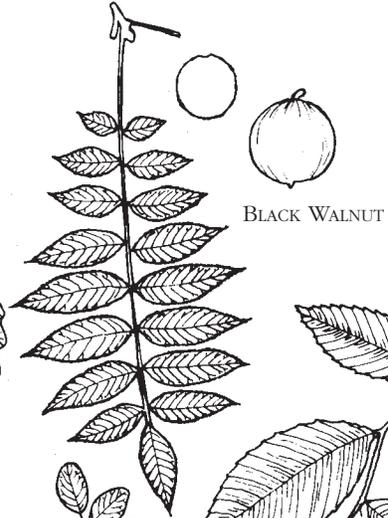




EASTERN REDBUD

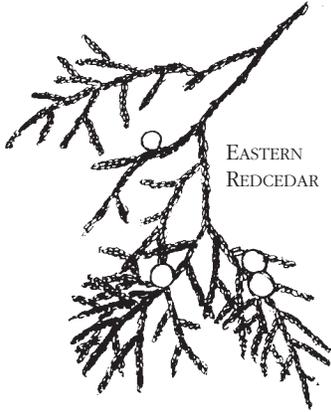


CHESTNUT OAK



BLACK WALNUT

BUCKEYE (RED)



EASTERN REDCEDAR



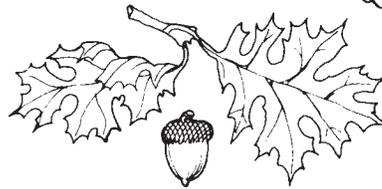
SOUTHERN RED OAK



BLACK LOCUST



AMERICAN BEECH



SHUMARD OAK



AMERICAN HOLLY

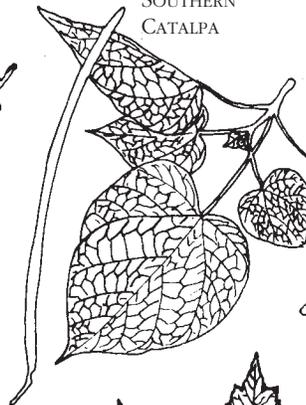


LONGLEAF PINE

AMERICAN ELM



SOUTHERN CATALPA



SWEETGUM



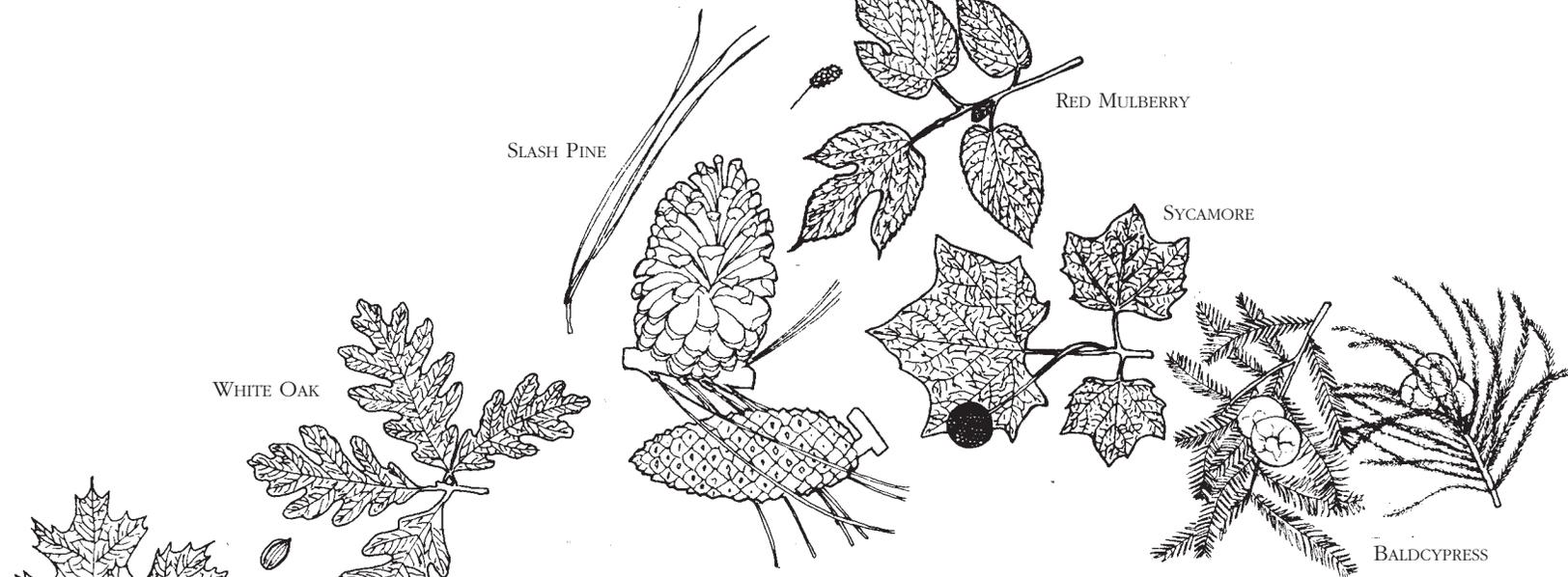
OVERCUP OAK



YELLOW-POPLAR OR TULIPTREE



RED MAPLE

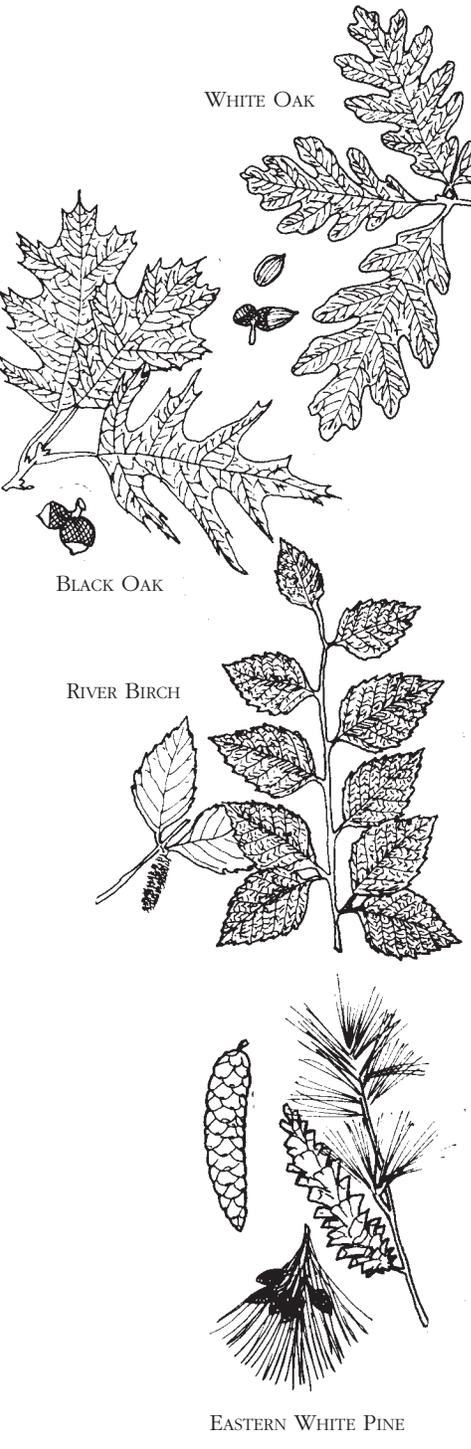


A Key to Common Trees of Alabama

This key can help you easily identify any of the 66 most common trees found in Alabama. Keys such as this one, which is based on a series of choices between two statements, are called dichotomous keys. This key was designed for use during the growing season. Leaf and bark characteristics are the primary features used for identifying trees.

A listing of the common and scientific names for the 66 native trees is found on page 9. This key will not work for trees that do not appear on this list. The following suggestions should help you as you begin working with the key:

- 1) Always start at the beginning of the key and follow it step by step. Each choice will refer you to the next step, which may be a number, another section in the key, or the conclusion or species. It is a good practice to write down your order of progress, such as 1 - 2 - 4. This will make it easier for you to find and correct mistakes.
- 2) Always read both choices, even if the first choice sounds correct. The second one may sound even better.
- 3) If the choice between two statements is not clear, or you don't have enough information to make the choice, follow both choices to their conclusions. Then, try to choose between the descriptions of the two resulting answers.
- 4) Always look at several samples when keying a specimen. Key characteristics, especially leaves, can vary even on the same tree.
- 5) When measurements are given, as in the size of the leaves, don't guess. Use a ruler.
- 6) Become familiar with the botanical terms used to describe trees. Terms used in this key are illustrated on pages 10 through 13.



Tree Identification Key

- 1. Leaves needle-like or scale-like; trees' with conessee **Conifers**
- 1. Leaves flat and broad; trees without conessee **Hardwoods**

Conifers

- 1. Leaves needle-like2
- 1. Leaves scale-like, sometimes pointed on the end and prickly to the touch; bark reddish-brown and fibrous; cones look like bluish-gray berries about ¼ inch in diameter; cones occur only on female treeseastern redcedar
- 2. Needles attached to the twig in bundles or clusters3
- 2. Needles attached to the twig separately, not in bundles or clusters4
- 3. Needles in bundles or clusters of 2 or 3see ***Yellow Pines***
- 3. Needles in bundles or clusters of 5, 3 to 5 inches long, bluish-greeneastern white pine
- 4. Needles yellow-green, ½- to ¾-inch long; foliage has a feather-like appearance and falls off in the winter; bark fibrous, scaly, reddish brown but weathers to ash-gray, cones rounded like a ball; tree are found most commonly in swampsbaldcypress
- 4. Needles are borne on short stalks which remain on the twig when needles fall off, shiny-green above with 2 white stripes underneath, 1/3- to 1/2-inch long; cones light-brown, borne on the ends of the branches; trees evergreen; drooping branches may hang to the groundeastern hemlock

Yellow Pines

- 1. Needles in bundles or clusters of 32
- 1. Needles in bundles or clusters of 2 or 2 and 3 on the same tree3
- 2. Needles 5 to 9 inches long; cones 3 to 6 inches long and prickly to the touchloblolly pine
- 2. Needles 8 to 18 inches long; cones large in size, 6 to 10 inches long; seedlings look like clumps of grasslongleaf pine
- 3. Needles in bundles or clusters of 2 and 3 on the same tree4
- 3. Needles in bundles or clusters of 2, 1 to 3 inches long5
- 4. Needles small in size, 3 to 5 inches long; cones 1 to 3 inches longshortleaf pine
- 4. Needles usually 8 to 12 inches long; cones 2 to 6 inches longslash pine
- 5. Needles stout, yellow-green, twisted; cones 1 to 2 inches long and cone shaped; branches reddish; usually a very limby tree often used as a Christmas treeVirginia pine
- 5. Needles slender, dark green, twisted; cones 1 to 2½ inches long and rounded; bark silver-gray, furrowed, more like the bark of a hardwood than a pine; trees usually found in stream bottomsspruce pine

Hardwoods

-
- 1. Leaves and buds opposite2
 - 1. Leaves and buds alternate7
 - 2. Leaves compound3
 - 2. Leaves simple5
 - 3. Leaves pinnately compound4
 - 3. Leaves palmately compoundbuckeye
 - 4. Leaflet edges smooth (entire), not toothedsee **Ashes**
 - 4. Leaflet edges toothed (serrate)see **Maples**
 - 5. Leaves not lobed6
 - 5. Leaves lobedsee **Maples**
 - 6. Leaves heart-shapedsouthern catalpa
 - 6. Leaves oval-shaped with a pointed tipflowering dogwood
 - 7. Leaves compound8
 - 7. Leaves simple11
 - 8. Leaflet edges smooth (entire), not toothed9
 - 8. Leaflet edges finely toothed (serrate)10
 - 9. Leaves once pinnately compound; twigs armed with unbranched thornsblack locust
 - 9. Leaves once and twice pinnately compound; twigs armed
 - with branched thorns, commonly 3-branchedhoneylocust
 - 10. Leaves with 15 to 23 leaflets; fruit a yellow-green ball 1½ to 2 inches in diameter; bark gray-brown to blackblack walnut
 - 10. Leaves with 5 to 17 leaflets, usually 15 or lesssee **Hickories**
 - 11. Leaf edges smooth (entire), not toothed12
 - 11. Leaf edges toothed (serrate)20
 - 12. Leaves lobed13
 - 12. Leaves not lobed15
 - 13. Leaves all approximately the same shape14
 - 13. Leaves mitten-shaped, 3-lobed and unlobed. on the same tree; bark
 - dark reddish brown; leaves, twigs, and roots smell like root beersassafras
 - 14. Leaf tip (apex) flat, leaves commonly 4-lobed, tulip-shaped; bark light grayyellow-poplar
 - 14. Leaf tip (apex) pointed or rounded, leaves not 4-lobedsee **Oaks**
 - 15. Leaves heart-shaped, 3 to 5 inches in diameter; flower small and red;
 - fruit a bean (legume), 2 to 3 inches longeastern redbud
 - 15. Leaves not heart-shaped, usually longer than broad16
 - 16. Leaf edges armed with sharp spines; fruit a red berry; tree evergreenAmerican holly
 - 16. Leaf edges not armed with sharp spines17
 - 17. Twigs with narrow lines circling them near the place where
 - each leaf is attachedsee **Magnolias**
 - 17. Twigs without narrow lines circling them18
 - 18. Twigs with terminal buds at the ends19
 - 18. Twigs without terminal buds at the ends; fruit an orange to reddish purple berry; bark looks like the back of an alligatorcommon persimmon
 - 19. Leaf stem (petiole) which attaches leaf blade to twig less than ¼ inch longsee **Oaks**
 - 19. Leaf stem (petiole) which attaches leaf blade to twig 1 to 2 inches longsee **Tupelos**

Hardwoods (cont.)

20. Leaves not lobed	21
20. Leaves lobed	30
21. Twigs with terminal buds at the ends	22
21. Twigs without terminal buds at the ends	25
22. Primary veins extending from midrib to leaf margin	23
22. Primary veins uniting within leaf blade	24
23. Leaves triangular; buds brown and less than 3/4-inch long; bark at first yellowish green, smooth and thin, becoming thick gray and deeply furrowed	eastern cottonwood
23. Leaves oblong to oval-shaped; buds brown, about 1 inch long and needle-like; bark thin, smooth, and gray, does not change with age; favorite tree bark for carving initials	American beech
24. Leaf edges very finely toothed (serrate)	black cherry
24. Leaf edges coarsely toothed (serrate)	see Oaks
25. Leaf edges simply serrate or dentately serrate	26
25. Leaf edges doubly serrate	27
26. Leaf edges simply serrate; leaves somewhat heart-shaped, 2 to 4 inches long and 1 to 2 inches wide; bark gray-brown with corky warts	hackberry
26. Leaf edges dentately serrate; leaves 3 to 5 inches long and 2 to 3 inches wide with a heart-shaped or flattened base; bark grayish-brown and deeply furrowed with scaly ridges	American basswood
27. Bark reddish brown on very young stems and scaly or papery on older stems	28
27. Bark bluish gray to brownish gray and smooth or furrowed	29
28. Bark turning white to salmon-pink and papery with age	river birch
28. Bark turning gray to brown and scaly with age	eastern hophornbeam
29. Bark bluish gray, tight, thin and smooth with a muscular appearance	American hornbeam
29. Bark ash-gray to brownish gray and furrowed	see Elms
30. Leaves star-shaped or nearly so	31
30. Leaves mitten-shaped, 3-lobed and unlobed on the same tree	red mulberry
31. Leaf edges finely toothed (serrate); twigs often have corky wings; bark gray to gray-brown and deeply furrowed	sweetgum
31. Leaf edges irregularly toothed; twigs have a zigzag shape; bark creamy white to brown and smooth to scaly	sycamore

Oaks

There are two broad groups of oaks, whiteoaks and red oaks. White oaks have leaves with rounded lobes and no bristles at the ends. Red oaks usually have leaves with small bristles at the ends of the

lobes and the leaf apex. Although it is sometimes difficult to see the bristle-tips on the leaves, water oak and willow oak belong to the red oak group.

1. Leaf edges smooth (entire)	2
1. Leaf edges distinctly toothed or lobed	4
2. Leaf edges rolled under; undersurface hairy	live oak
2. Leaf edges not rolled under; undersurface not hairy	3
3. Leaves linear, 1/2 to 1 inch wide	willow oak
3. Leaves spatula-shaped, 1 to 2 inches wide; wider at the tip (apex) than at the base.....	water oak

Oaks (cont.)

4. Leaf tip (apex) and lobes usually rounded, if pointed not bristle-tipped	5
4. Leaf tip (apex) and lobes usually bristle-tipped	8
5. Leaf veins evenly spaced with each vein terminating in a lobe; leaf edges shallowly and evenly lobed; bark dark brown to black	chestnut oak
5. Leaf veins not evenly spaced; leaf edges deeply or irregularly lobed	6
6. Leaves leathery and rough to the touch, dark green, commonly 5-lobed with 2 large central lobes giving leaves a cross-like appearance; bark thick, gray, blocky, or scaly	post oak
6. Leaves not leathery, smooth to the touch; some leaves with more than 5 lobes, not cross-like	7
7. Leaves deeply and regularly lobed, 7 to 9 lobes, bright green; bark light gray and scaly; large acorns with cup enclosing one-fourth of nut	white oak
7. Leaves irregularly lobed and extremely variable, 5 to 9 lobes, dark green; bark gray brown, thick and rough; acorn cup almost completely encloses the nut	overcup oak
8. Leaves 3-lobed; lobes only in the upper half	9
8. Leaves 5- to 11-lobed, lobes in lower and upper halves	11
9. Leaf undersurfaces smooth, without hairs	water oak
9. Leaf undersurfaces covered with rusty red or orange hairs	10
10. Leaves large; lobes broadly rounded	blackjack oak
10. Leaves bell-shaped; lobes narrow and somewhat pointed	southern red oak
11. Trees found on dry upland sites	12
11. Trees found on moist sites, mainly in creek or river bottoms	15
12. Leaf undersurface covered with rusty red hair; leaves irregular, 5- to 7-lobed southern	red oak
12. Leaf undersurface green and smooth, often with tufts of hair in the axils of principal veins, leaves more uniform	13
13. Leaves dull green, 7- to 11-lobed; acorn cup saucer-shaped enclosing less than one-fourth of the nut	northern red oak
13. Leaves shiny green, 5 to 7-lobed (rarely 9-lobed); acorn cup bowl-shaped enclosing half of nut	14
14. Leaves dark green, 5- to 7-lobed; bark dark brown to black, thick and furrowed; inner bark orange-yellow; buds large, coated with gray wooly hair	black oak
14. Leaves light green, 7-lobed (rarely 9-lobed); bark gray-brown to black, broken into irregular ridges, inner bark reddish; buds smaller, covered with fine dark brown hair	scarlet oak
15. Leaf undersurface covered with grayish white to light brown hair; bark gray to black, flaky or scaly, resembling the bark of a cherry tree	cherrybark oak
15. Leaf undersurface green and smooth, often with tufts of hair in the axils of principal veins; bark not resembling the bark of a cherry tree	16
16. Bark whitish gray with scaly ridges separated by furrows; acorn cup saucer-shaped enclosing less than one-fourth of nut	Shumard oak
16. Bark dark gray-brown, broken into flat ridges; acorn cup bowl-shaped enclosing half of nut	Nuttall oak

Hickories

Hickories are divided into two broad groups, true hickories and pecan hickories. True hickories usually have five to seven leaflets per leaf. Pecan hickories normally have nine to 17 leaflets per leaf. The buds of true hickories have overlapping scales similar to fish scales. Pecan hickories have valvate buds (bud scales meet at the edges and do not overlap).

1. Leaves usually with 7 or fewer leaflets (occasionally 9); buds covered with overlapping scales2
1. Leaves usually with 9 or more leaflets (occasionally 7); buds valvate (without overlapping scales)4
2. Leaves usually with 5 leaflets, occasionally 73
2. Leaves usually with 7 leaflets, occasionally 9mockernut hickory
3. Leaflets with hairy undersurfaces; bark bluish gray to gray and shaggyshagbark hickory
3. Leaflets with smooth undersurfaces; bark deeply furrowed with narrow interlacing ridges, ridges may be scaly at the surfacepignut hickory
4. Leaves with 7 to 11 leaflets, usually 9; buds sulfur-yellowbitternut hickory
4. Leaves with 7 to 17 leaflets, usually 11 to 15; buds not sulfur-yellow5
5. Leaves with 9 to 17 leaflets, usually 11 to 15; fruit a round, oblong, smooth nut, grown commercially for its sweet tastepecan
5. Leaves with 7 to 13 leaflets, usually 11; fruit a flattened, rough, bitter nutwater hickory

Maples

1. Leaf edges variously toothed between lobes2
1. Leaf edges mostly smooth (entire) between lobessugar maple
2. Leaf undersurface shiny (glabrous)red maple
2. Leaf undersurface silverysilver maple

Tupelos

1. Leaves 2 to 5 inches long; fruit usually in clusters of 2 or 3blackgum
1. Leaves 5 to 10 inches long; fruit solitary; trees usually have a swelled base; often growing beside cypress in standing waterwater tupelo

Elms

1. Twigs with corky ridges or wings, more prominent on dryer sites, sometimes rare on moist sites; small, leaf 1½ to 3½ inches longwinged elm
1. Twigs without wings; leaves usually 4 inches long or longer2
2. Leaves rough on the upper surfaceslippery elm
2. Leaves smooth on the upper surfaceAmerican elm

Ashes

1. Leaves lustrous green above and below; lateral buds positioned above a shield-shaped leaf scargreen ash
1. Leaves pale green above, sometimes silvery below; lateral buds partly surrounded by a U-shaped leaf scarwhite ash

Magnolias

1. Leaves leathery, upper surface shiny bright green, undersurface covered with rusty red wooly hair; flowers large, white, 6 to 8 inches wide.....southern magnolia
1. Leaves not leathery, upper surface yellow-green, undersurface sometimes hairy; flowers bell-shaped, greenish yellow, 2 to 3 inches wide.cucumbertree

Common Trees of Alabama

The following is a list of 66 trees that are found in Alabama. It is not a complete list of all trees found in the state. Trees are listed by preferred common name and scientific name (genus and species). Some trees are known by several different common

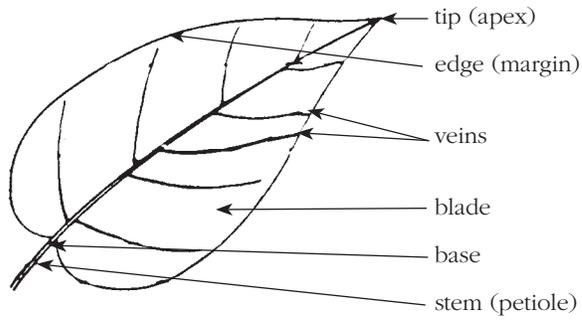
names, but each has a unique scientific name. If you are not familiar with a common name used in this list or in the key, you may wish to find it in another reference by looking up the scientific name.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Common Name	Scientific Name
boxelder	<i>Acer negundo</i> L.	spruce pine	<i>Pinus glabra</i> Walt.
red maple	<i>Acer rubrum</i> L.	longleaf pine	<i>Pinus palustris</i> Mill.
silver maple	<i>Acer saccharinum</i> L.	eastern white pine	<i>Pinus strobus</i> L.
sugar maple	<i>Acer saccharum</i> Marsh.	loblolly pine	<i>Pinus taeda</i> L.
buckeye (red)	<i>Aesculus</i> spp.	Virginia pine	<i>Pinus virginiana</i> Mill.
river birch	<i>Betula nigra</i> L.	sycamore	<i>Platanus occidentalis</i> L.
American hornbeam		eastern cottonwood	<i>Populus deltoides</i> Bartr. ex Marsh.
or blue beech	<i>Carpinus caroliniana</i> Walt.	black cherry	<i>Prunus serotina</i> Ehrh.
water hickory	<i>Carya aquatica</i> (Michx. f.) Nutt.	white oak	<i>Quercus alba</i> L.
bitternut hickory	<i>Carya cordiformis</i> (Wangenh.) K. Koch	scarlet oak	<i>Quercus coccinea</i> Muenchh.
pignut hickory	<i>Carya glabra</i> (Mill.) Sweet	southern red oak	<i>Quercus falcata</i> Michx.
pecan	<i>Carya illinoensis</i> (Wangenh.) K. Koch	cherrybark oak	<i>Quercus pagoda</i> Raf. (formerly known as <i>Quercus falcata</i> var. <i>pagodaefolia</i> Ell.)
shagbark hickory	<i>Carya ovata</i> (Mill.) K. Koch	overcup oak	<i>Quercus lyrata</i> Walt.
mockernut hickory	<i>Carya tomentosa</i> (Poir.) Nutt.	blackjack oak	<i>Quercus marilandica</i> Muenchh.
southern catalpa	<i>Catalpa bignonioides</i> Walt.	water oak	<i>Quercus nigra</i> L.
hackberry	<i>Celtis occidentalis</i> L.	Nuttall oak	<i>Quercus texana</i> Buckl. (formerly known as <i>Quercus nuttalli</i> Palmer)
eastern redbud	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> L.	willow oak	<i>Quercus phellos</i> L.
flowering dogwood	<i>Cornus florida</i> L.	chestnut oak	<i>Quercus prinus</i> L.
common persimmon	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i> L.	northern red oak	<i>Quercus rubra</i> L.
American beech	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i> Ehrh.	Shumard oak	<i>Quercus shumardii</i> Buckl.
white ash	<i>Fraxinus americana</i> L.	post oak	<i>Quercus stellata</i> Wangenh.
green ash	<i>Fraxinus pennsylvanica</i> Marsh.	black oak	<i>Quercus velutina</i> Lam.
honeylocust	<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i> L.	live oak	<i>Quercus virginiana</i> Mill.
American holly	<i>Ilex opaca</i> Ait	black locust	<i>Robinia pseudoacacia</i> L.
black walnut	<i>Juglans nigra</i> L.	sassafras	<i>Sassafras albidum</i> (Nutt.) Nees
eastern redcedar	<i>Juniperus virginiana</i> L.	baldcypress	<i>Taxodium distichum</i> var. <i>distichum</i> (L.) Rich. (formerly known as <i>Taxodium distichum</i> (L.) Rich)
sweetgum	<i>Liquidambar styraciflua</i> L.	American basswood	<i>Tilia americana</i> L.
yellow-poplar or tuliptree		eastern hemlock	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i> (L.) Carr.
or tulip-poplar	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i> L.	winged elm	<i>Ulmus alata</i> Michx.
cucumbertree	<i>Magnolia acuminata</i> L.	American elm	<i>Ulmus americana</i> L.
southern magnolia	<i>Magnolia grandiflora</i> L.	slippery elm	<i>Ulmus rubra</i> Muhl.
red mulberry	<i>Morus rubra</i> L.		
water tupelo	<i>Nyssa aquatica</i> L.		
black tupelo or blackgum	<i>Nyssa sylvatica</i> Marsh		
eastern hophornbeam or American hophornbeam	<i>Ostrya virginiana</i> (Mill.) K. Koch		
shortleaf pine	<i>Pinus echinata</i> Mill.		
slash pine	<i>Pinus elliotii</i> Engelm.		

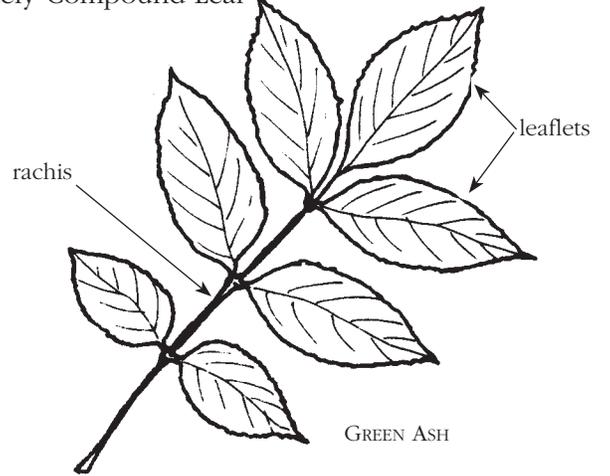
The tree identification key was adapted from *Guide To Southern Trees* by Ellwood S. Harrar and J. George Harrar; *Trees, Shrubs, & Woody Vines of East Texas* by Elray S. Nixon and Bruce L. Cunningham; and *Forest Trees. A Guide to the Southeastern and Mid-Atlantic Regions of the United States* by Lisa J. Samuelson and Michael E. Hogan.

Leaf Types

Simple Leaf



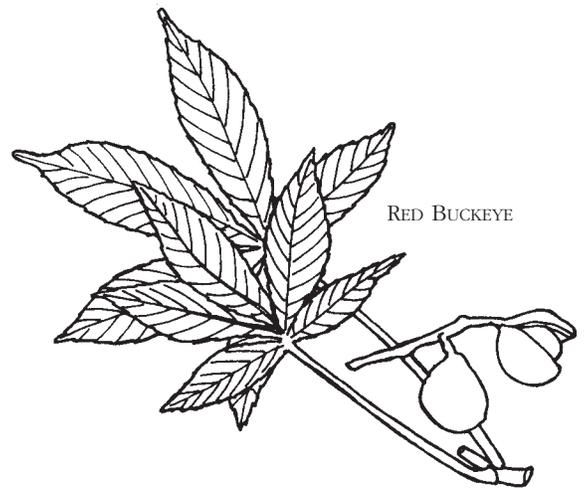
Pinnately Compound Leaf



Twice Pinnately Compound Leaf

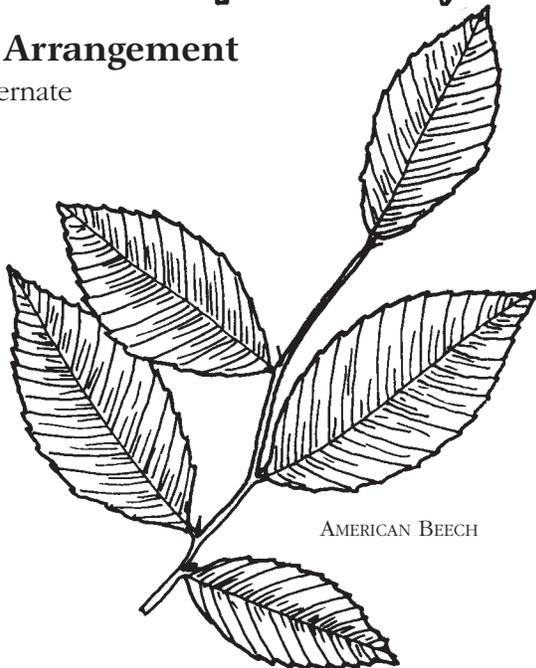


Palmately Compound Leaf



Leaf Arrangement

Alternate

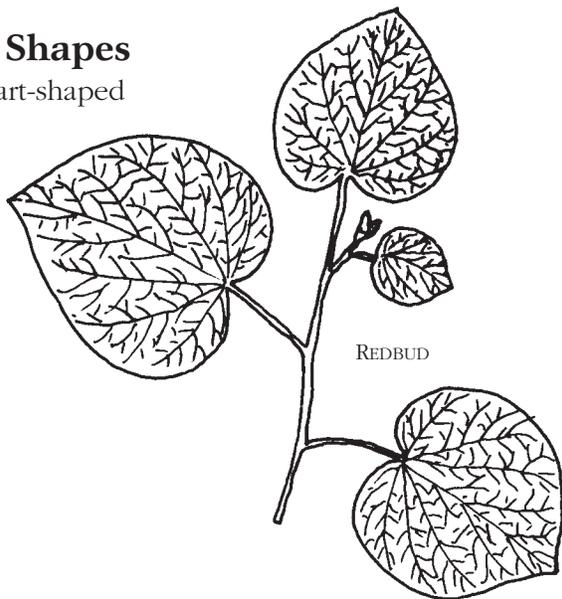


Opposite

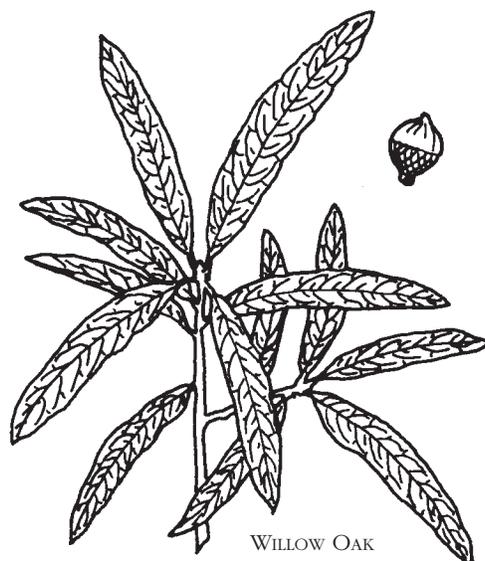


Leaf Shapes

heart-shaped



linear



spatula-shaped



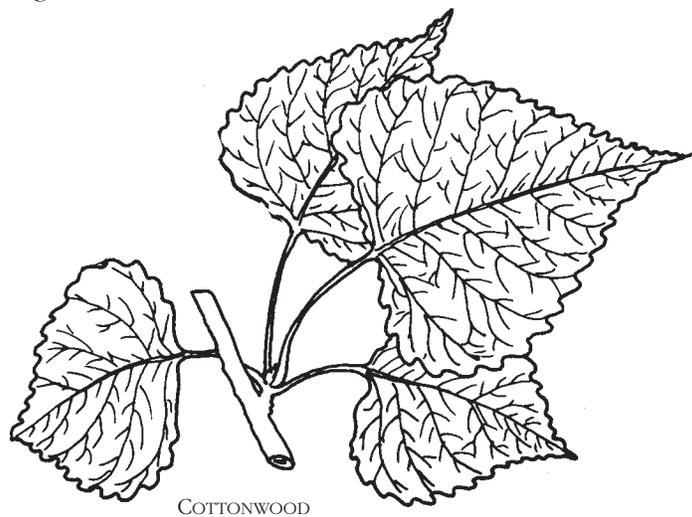
bell-shaped



cross-like

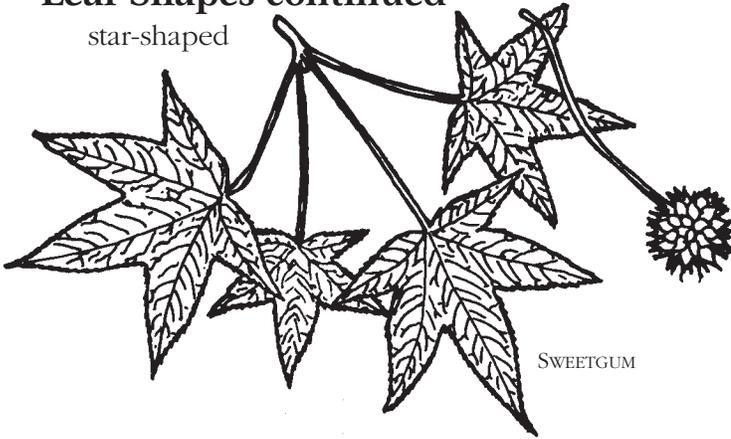


triangular



Leaf Shapes continued

star-shaped



SWEETGUM

mitten-shaped



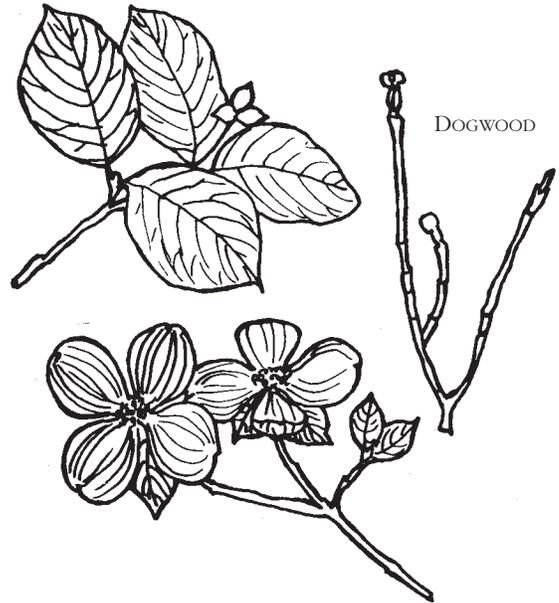
RED MULBERRY
(NOT ALL LEAVES
OF THE SPECIES ARE
MITTEN-SHAPED)

oblong



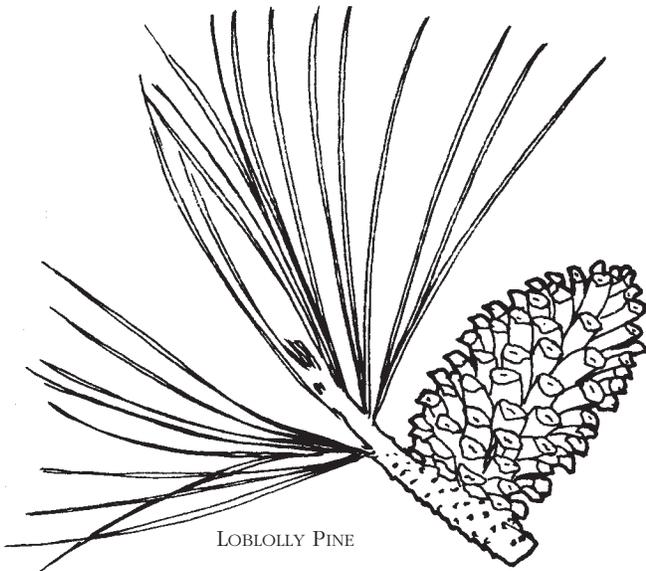
MAGNOLIA

oval



DOGWOOD

needle-like



LOBLOLLY PINE

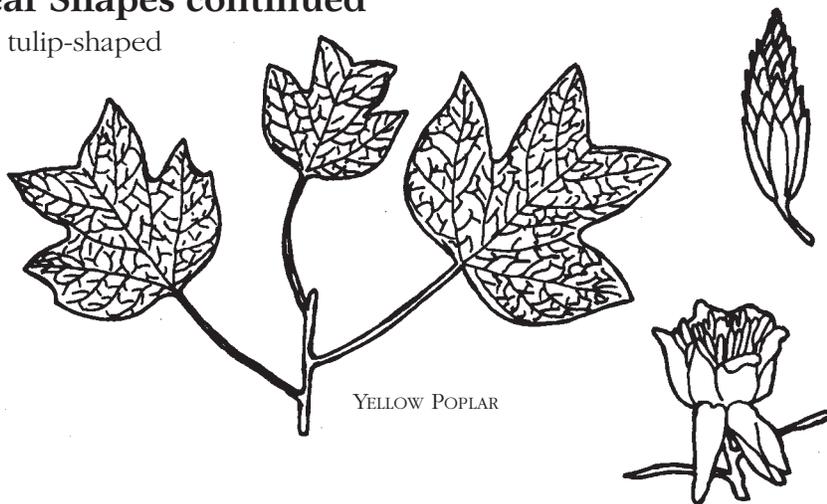
scale-like



EASTERN RED CEDAR

Leaf Shapes continued

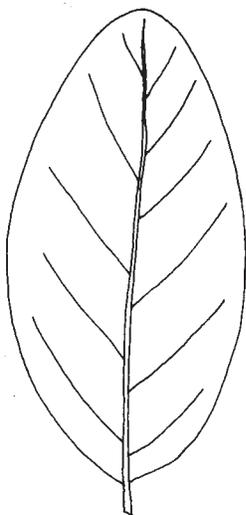
tulip-shaped



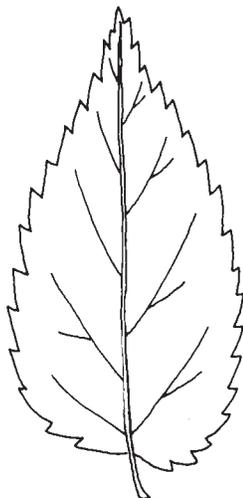
YELLOW POPLAR

Leaf Edges (Margins)

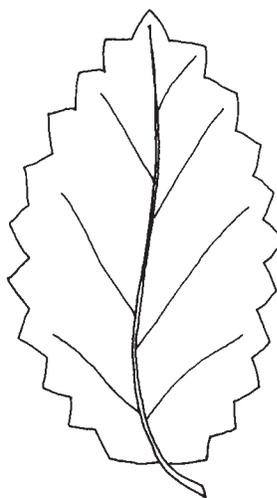
smooth (entire)



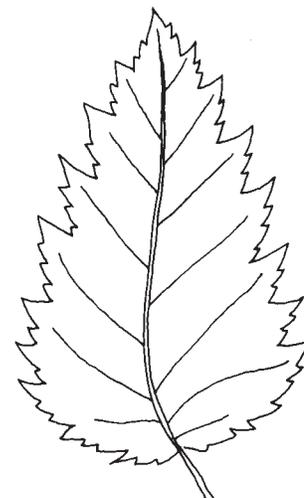
toothed (serrate)



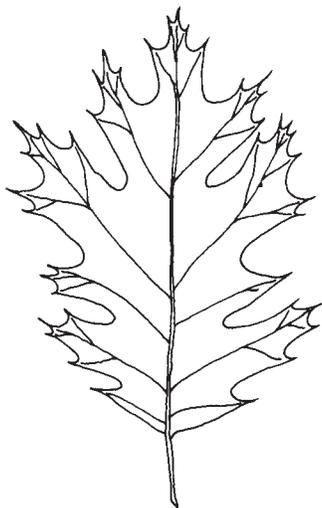
dentately serrate



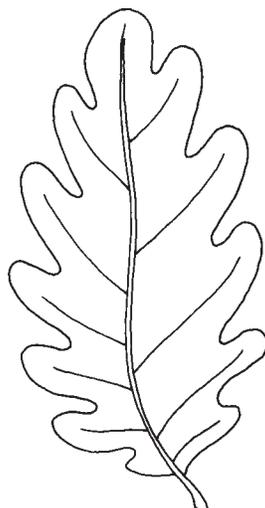
doubly serrate



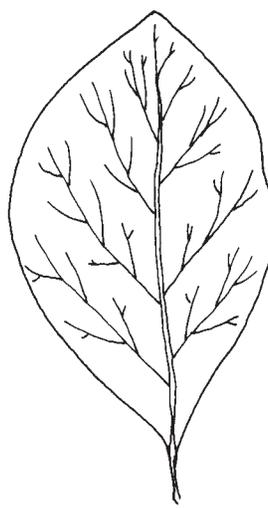
bristle-tipped

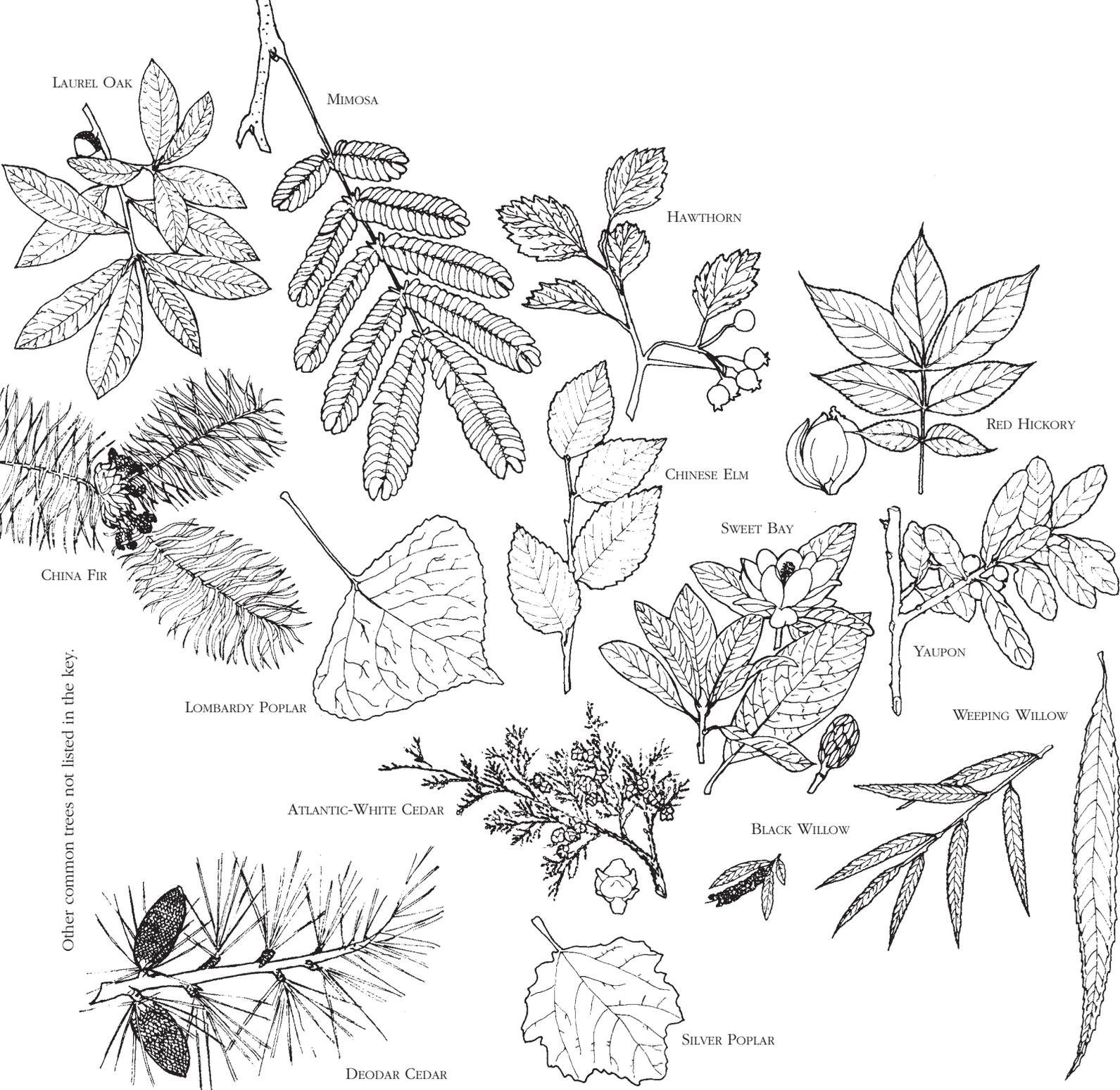


lobed



unlobed





Other common trees not listed in the key.



ANR-0509

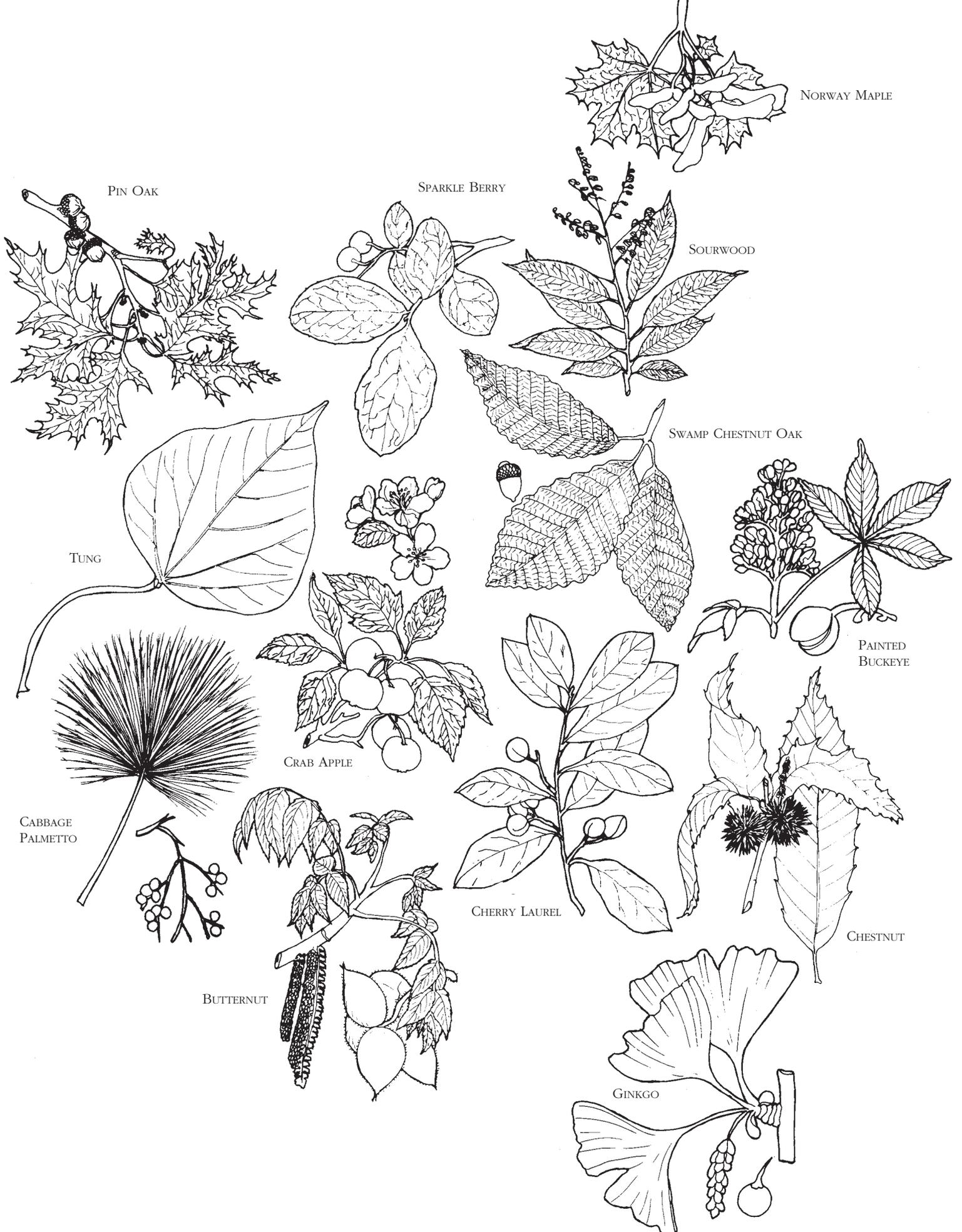
Becky Barlow, *Extension Specialist*, Assistant Professor, Forestry, Wildlife, and Natural Resource Management, Auburn University. Originally prepared by **Frank A. Roth II**, former *Forest Management Specialist*, and **Larkin H. Wade**, former *Extension Forester*. Illustrations by **Romaine S. Crockett**, former *Extension Information Specialist/Art*.

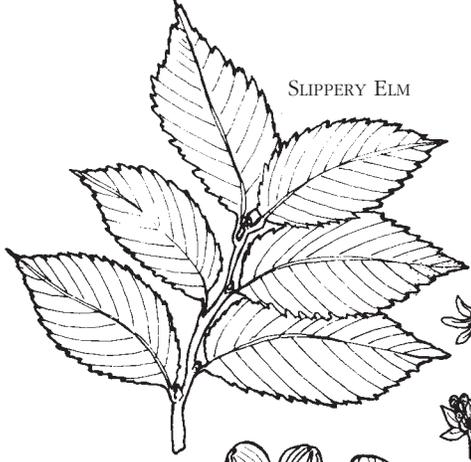
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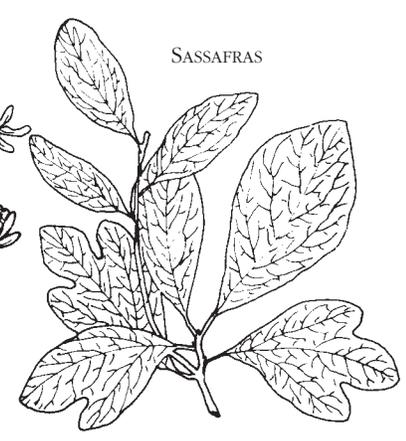
10M, Revised Oct 2010, ANR-0509

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SLIPPERY ELM



SASSAFRAS



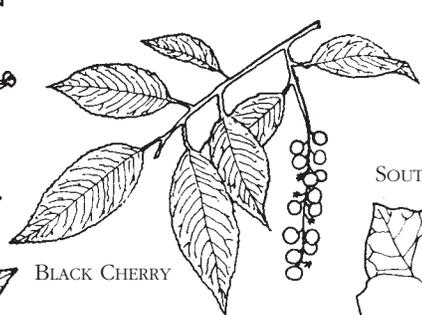
BOXELDER



FLOWERING DOGWOOD



SUGAR MAPLE



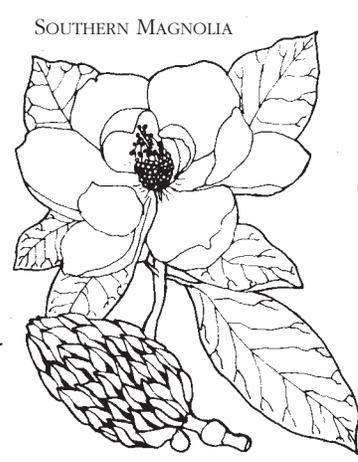
BLACK CHERRY



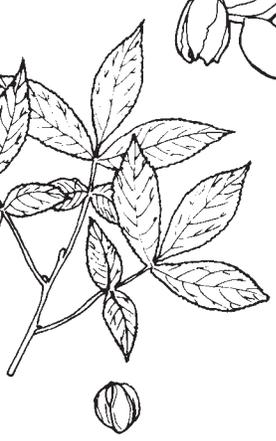
LIVE OAK



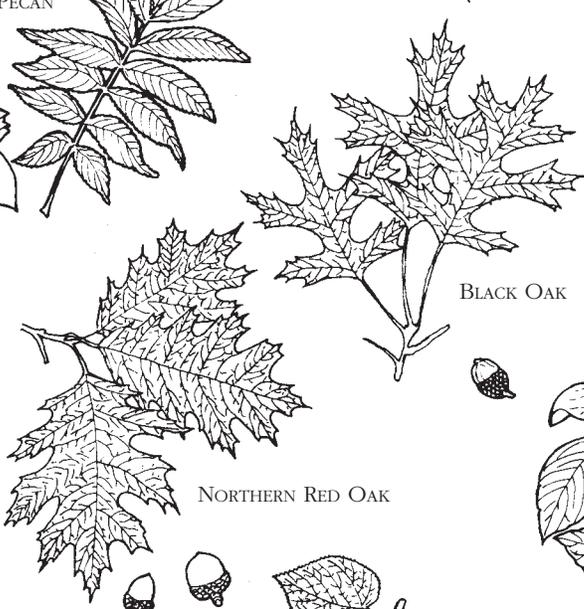
PECAN



SOUTHERN MAGNOLIA



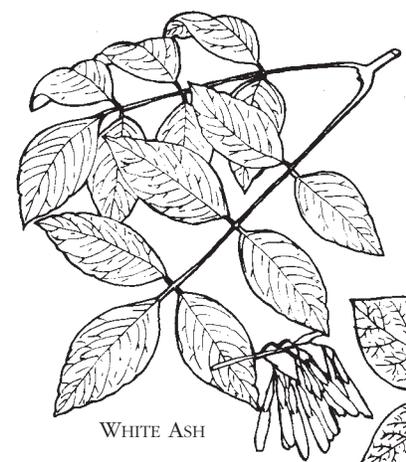
PIGNUT HICKORY



NORTHERN RED OAK



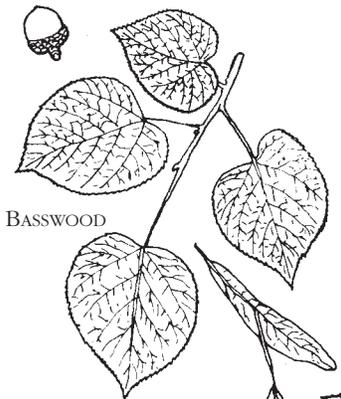
BLACK OAK



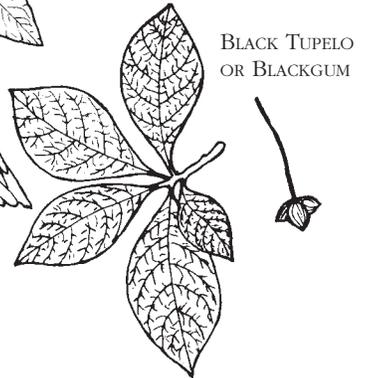
WHITE ASH



CHERRYBARK OAK



AMERICAN BASSWOOD



BLACK TUPELO OR BLACKGUM



HACKBERRY