Butternut - New For 2026!

Juglans cinerea



Butternut
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 2

Other Names: White Walnut

Description:

A medium sized shade tree with a wide spreading canopy and interestingly textured compound leaves; sweet oily walnuts are edible and attract squirrels, can be somewhat messy in fall; possibly the hardiest of all nut trees



Butternut foliage
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Edible Qualities

Butternut is a large tree that is commonly grown for its edible qualities. It produces large brown round nuts in hard shells which are usually ready for picking from early to late fall. The nuts have a sweet taste and an oily texture.

The nuts are most often used in the following ways:

- Fresh Eating
- Baking

Features & Attributes

Butternut has dark green deciduous foliage on a tree with a round habit of growth. The large pinnately compound leaves turn yellow in fall. It produces brown nuts in late fall. The fruit can be messy if allowed to drop on the lawn or walkways, and may require occasional clean-up.

This is a deciduous tree with a more or less rounded form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition. This plant will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting squirrels to your yard. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Aside from its primary use as an edible, Butternut is sutiable for the following landscape applications;

- Shade
- Orchard/Edible Landscaping

Planting & Growing

Butternut will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a slow rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more. This is a self-pollinating variety, so it doesn't require a second plant nearby to set fruit.

This tree is typically grown in a designated area of the yard because of its mature size and spread. It should only be grown in full sunlight. It is very adaptable to both dry and moist locations, and should do just fine under average home landscape conditions. It is not particular as to soil type or pH. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.