Black Walnut

*Juglans nigra*

**Nuts!**

Black Walnut trees are best known for the nutritious edible nuts they produce. Many nuts we eat are members of the walnut family (Juglandaceae) including pecans, hickories, and butternuts.

In the spring and summer, light green orbs appear on the branches—these are the fruits. By autumn these fall to the ground, and over a couple of weeks the outer green husk darkens and softens. Inside the husk is the nut shell which surrounds the part we eat—the nut meat. Both the husk and the nut shell are very hard to crack open.
A Dark Past

Black walnut trees have long been valued for their beautiful chocolate brown-colored wood. During colonial times, walnut wood was often turned into fine furniture and gunstocks. Walnut is also very durable and good for building fences.

The walnut husk is rich in tannins, as well as another chemical called juglone. When the husks are boiled, these chemicals oxidize and turn the water dark brown. The resulting liquid was once widely used for clothing dye, wood stain, and writing ink.

The black walnuts growing beside Valley Road were one of the first major tree groups planted at the Arboretum. Trees in this grove were started from seed in the late 1800s. This group displays the typical compact, open rounded crowns and the straight, branchless trunks typical of forest grown trees. The lifespan of a black walnut tree can exceed 250 years, so these trees should be growing strong for another century.

There are 11 black walnut trees located here. 🌟

Can you find them all?