

Black Walnut

(*Juglans nigra*)

Black Walnut is a large tree, with mature specimens reaching 100 feet tall. Black Walnut is found throughout the eastern two-thirds of the US, into Utah in the west. It is also cultivated in Hawaii. Many other species of *Juglans* are found in other smaller, isolated parts of the US, but extensive cross-reactivity can be expected. Black Walnut prefers full sun, and will not do well in shady environments. It also produces a toxin, called juglone, which can be found in the bark, leaves, nut husks and roots of Black Walnut. This toxin acts to inhibit certain competing species of trees, notably Birch and Pine. Interestingly, Native Americans would put Black Walnut bark into ponds as a way to make the fish easier to catch! Black Walnut lumber is prized for its rich color, durability and striking grain. The nut is also an important cultivated crop in many parts of the world.

Black Walnut pollen is a severe allergen. Walnuts tend to pollinate a bit late in the tree pollen season, in late April and May. The dispersal of pollen is most influenced by rising temperatures and, to a lesser degree, lower humidity. Specific protein allergens have been identified in Walnuts, with most work done on English Walnut. Extensive cross-reactivity has been shown not only among the Walnuts, but also between Walnuts and Hickory/Pecan trees (they are also members of the Walnut family).

