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OSAGE ORANGE



MACLURA POMIFERA

WHAT IS A COMMON USE OF THE OSAGE ORANGE TREE?

- A. Fruit is used for a green "orange juice"
- B. Leaves are used as seasoning
- C. Wood is used for archery bows
- D. Wood is used to make a green dye



The large fruit of the Osage Orange.

The fruit of the Osage Orange makes it one of the easier trees to identify. The Softball sized fruit is made up of several smaller drupelets. each drupelet has a seed at it's base near the center of the fruit. The fruit is identified by it's yellow-green hue and large size relative to other tree's fruits. The fruit and stems of the plant have a milky white juice that has been known to cause some skin irritation. Many claim that the fruit of the Osage Orange is a natural pest deterrent, keeping homes free of cockroaches, spiders, crickets, and other bugs. The fruit of the Osage Orange, often referred to as a hedge apple, is also well known for being one of the main types of ammunition for small children when fighting. While the fruit is believed to be toxic the seeds are often foraged upon by squirrels in the winter months. The large fruit and thorns make this tree undesirable in many landscapes

OSAGE ORANGE

The *Maclura Pomifera* is known by many different names however Osage Orange is the most common. The original geographical range of the tree was limited to Eastern Texas, Southern Arkansas, and Southern Oklahoma. The tree now spans a much larger range due to it's use in farming.

BARK/WOOD CHARACTERISTICS:

The bark has a distinct deep furrow. The wood is a very dense hard wood. When first cut into the wood is a light yellow-orange color but after exposure to the air the wood begins to turn brown. The twigs are lined with thorns helping to identify the tree when fruits are not present.



LEAF STRUCTURE/CHARACTERISTICS:

The alternately arranged leaves are typically 3-5 inches in length and 2-3 inches wide. The leaves are entire, ovate, and typically wavy. Tops of the leaves are a dark green color while the underside is lighter. In the fall the leaves will turn a bright yellow. The tree is typically a medium sized tree growing to around 20-30 feet in height.



USES:

The Osage Orange has been used for many things throughout it's lifetime. One of the tree's best know uses was for fencing before the invention of barbed wire. A yellow dye can be produced from the wood. The hard wood is desired in wooden bow making and is known to be one of the best for making the bows. The hard wood also makes it desirable for woodworkers, often being used for knife handles and turned bowls.