

Netleaf Hackberry

This tree grows along the eastern base of the mountains and in the western counties, along streams and on hillsides. Hackberry is noted for its crooked stems, warty bark, and the smooth dried berries which may hang on well into the late winter. The tree can reach 50 in height feet but is usually less than 20 feet, sometimes only a small bush or tiny dwarf tree. The fruit is about 1/3 inch across, and is eaten by squirrels and songbirds. The Navajos boiled hackberry leaves and branches to make a brown dye for wool. Hackberry is subject to disfiguring galls on the stems and leaves. The scientific name is *Celtis reticulata* Torrey.

The Northern Hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) may extend up the Platte River valley nearly into the northeastern corner of Colorado, and spread from western Oklahoma nearly into southeastern Colorado. It is similar to the Netleaf hackberry except that the leaves are not leathery and the edges are toothed; its fruits wrinkle when dried.



Leaves: Leaf length is 2 to 3 inches; leaf width is about 1/2 the length. Leaves often rough-textured, leathery, and with a strong net of veins on the underside. Edges sparingly toothed or entire. Leaves are not symmetrical: unequal in shape comparing one side to the other. Leaf stalks short, only 1/8 to 1/4 inch.

Hackberry is one of the last trees to leaf out in the region, often bare when other trees are in full leaf.

Stems: branches often crooked. Buds covered with fine gray hairs.

Bark: smooth and pale gray or reddish-brown; older bark is broken into warty bumps or ridges.

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