ArborTags



This tree has one of the largest compound leaves of all. Spanning 20-36 inches these leaves are split into 3-7 branchlets each having 6-14 oval leaflets. When leaves fall in autumn it seems that the tree sheds its branches.

Gymnocladus dioicus

Kentucky Coffeetree

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Gymnocladus dioicus

Kentucky Coffeetree



The fruit is a thick flat pulpy pod 8-12 inches long containing seeds the size of coffee beans. Many of the stout pods remain on the tree during winter, aiding identification.

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The bark is relatively thin and dark gray with fissures. It often seems roughened by numerous small scales. "Gymnocladus" means 'naked branch' which well describes this tree in winter, having shed its large branch-like leaves.

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Gymnocladus dioicus

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Gymnocladus dioicus

Kentucky Coffeetree Myth has it that the roasted seeds were once used as a coffee substitute. As the raw seeds are poisonous, this practice soon died out.

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