



Nutty in November

In addition to dropping leaves in the fall, many trees also drop seeds and nuts on the ground. On your next hike, see if you can find any tree nuts and use the pictures below to help you identify them.



Caution: This activity is not suitable for children with nut allergies. Always seek the advice of a health professional before touching or eating any wild plant.

Many types of trees produce nuts that are eaten by people and animals. In the eastern United States, several types of nut trees grow in the wild. In the western United States, most nut trees grow on orchards and farms. The following photos show different types of nuts on the tree, in the shell, and removed from the shell. **Do any of these grow in your neighborhood?**

black walnuts



Black walnuts are difficult to remove from the husk and shell, but are good for eating raw and for cooking in meals and desserts. They are eaten by humans, turkeys, bears, and many other animals.

beech nuts



Beech nuts are not commonly eaten by humans since they are small and spoil quickly. However, they provide an important source of food for mice, chipmunks, squirrels, deer, and many kinds of birds.

hickory nuts

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Hickory and black walnut trees are in the same family. All hickory trees produce nuts that are eaten by various animals. Shagbark hickory nuts are the type most commonly eaten by humans.

pecans



Pecans are closely related to hickories. With a sweet flavor and high fat content, pecans are a popular food for humans and animals. Possums, raccoons, and many types of birds feed on pecans.

acorns



Though we don't usually think of them as "nuts," acorns are the most abundant of all wild tree nuts. They are not usually eaten by people, but many animals depend on acorns for food in the winter.