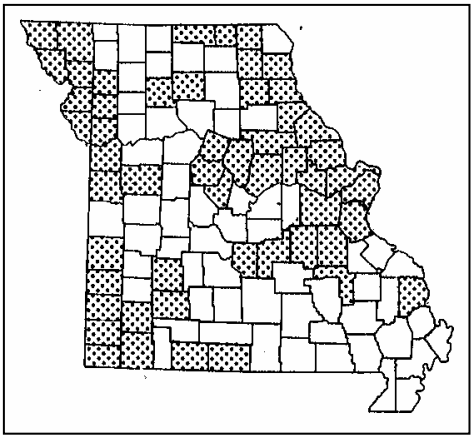
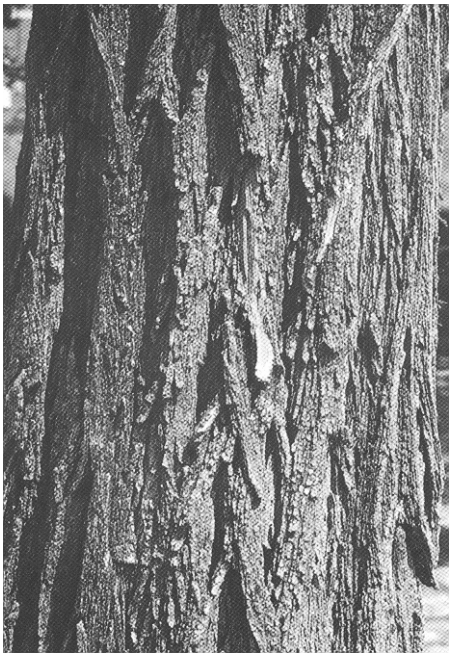
## Black Locust

*Robinia pseudoacacia* L.

This tree has also been referred to as yellow locust, locust and shipment locust, and was originally native to the Ozarks. The tree is now distributed throughout the state. It is fast growing and has been used to stabilize eroding soils. A member of the legume family, it is also well known around old farm houses and in city parks. It grows best on fertile limestone soils and is very susceptible to the locust borer which has destroyed many locust plantings.

The sapwood is yellowish green and narrow in most instances. The heartwood is greenish yellow to dark yellow, greenish, or golden brown. The bark is brown, thick, deeply furrowed, with rough, forked ridges. It is ring porous with a fairly prominent grain. The springwood pores are large and are completely occluded with tyloses in the heartwood. Locust is without a characteristic odor or taste and very heavy, very hard and very strong in bending. It is moderately low in shrinkage, turns well, but is hard to work with hand tools. Wood rays are generally visible to the naked eye. The wood is very durable and may be confused with Osage orange. Osage orange, however, is usually a deeper shade of yellow and the yellow coloring matter readily dissolves when shavings are placed in tepid water. Very little color can be extracted from black locust by this method.

The wood is excellent for home workshop projects, but there are so few trees available that it is not commercially important. However, it does appear occasionally at sawmills. The tree has been widely used for fence posts and telephone pole insulator pins, but today the lumber is generally sold locally for farm use.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