

# If you have a *native* butternut tree

Ontario's Recovery partners are interested in hearing from you

Butternut, *Juglans cinerea*, is an endangered species, threatened by a fungal disease called butternut canker, and protected under Ontario's Endangered Species Act (ESA 2007). Recovery partners are searching for native butternut that may be genetically resistant to the canker. But, in urban and long settled areas, exotic and hybrid walnuts (e.g. Japanese walnut X butternut) have been planted for decades.

If you can answer YES to several of these questions your tree is NOT likely a native butternut, and is also not protected under the ESA.

- Are **catkins** longer than 15 cm? They appear before the leaves and drop by mid June.  
(male hybrid catkin-→)



- Are **flowers** and **seed** in groups of 6 or more on long stalks? (L= Butternut, R =J walnut -→)



- Is the **new growth** very fuzzy and the mature compound **leaves** > 40 cm long?  
(fuzzy hybrid leaf petiole below) (Small Butternut leaf on top, J walnut on bottom)



- Is the **leaf scar's** upper margin notched?  
(L=notched hybrid, R=butternut, straight, -→)



- Is the tree's **diameter at breast height large** for its age?  
(> 2cm/year growth, e.g. a 60 cm dbh at 30 years old)

- Is the tree a good **nut producer every year**?

- Did the tree **start nut production before 15 years** of age?

- Is the tree free of canker and in **good health**?

- Do the **leaves drop late** in the fall en masse after a hard frost sometimes still green? (usually October) (native butternut leaves yellow and fall from mid to late August through September)

If the tree is likely a native butternut, contact us to fill out a survey form. Local recovery programs may offer health assessments in your area (trees they assess as heavily diseased and therefore *non-retainable under the ESA* can be removed). If trees are very vigorous we would like to collect samples for DNA tests to confirm that it is a native butternut. If it is native we would like to collect seed. **You can help by reporting seed crops**. Immature seed may fall in the early summer (due to storms, drought or insects) but sometimes viable seed can remain on the tree to mature in the fall. You tree may also show signs of disease resistance (healthy though close to dying trees) and we would ask permission to collect twigs (in March) to graft for resistance breeding. If the tree is not on your property, please ask the landowner if they are interested in working with our recovery program.

**Thanks for your support of our butternut recovery efforts!**

Forest Gene Conservation Association  
Suite 233, 266 Charlotte St  
Peterborough, Ontario  
K9J 2V4

T: (705) 755-3284  
F: (705) 755-3292  
[barb.boysen@ontario.ca](mailto:barb.boysen@ontario.ca)  
[www.fqca.net](http://www.fqca.net)