

## Leaves, Limbs, Needles and Boughs

by Fred D. Opperman

Gymnocladus dioicus (jim-nok'la-dus di-o-i'kus) now that is a mouthful! Kentucky Coffeetree is one of those trees that is overlooked when one is planting trees on the golf course. It is a tree with sturdy branching and it really doesn't have a form to it, being more free form when the leaves are off it. It is a tree with few pests or problems. The seeds were used by the early settlers in Kentucky to make coffee, hence its name.

Leaves: Alternate, bipinnately compound, to 36" long and 24" wide, with 3 to 17 pairs of pinnae, the lower usually reduced to simple leaflets, the upper with 6 to 14 leaflets. Leaflets ovate or elliptic ovate, 2 to 3" long.



Buds: Terminal — absent, laterals — small bronze, pubescent, partially sunken, scarcely projecting beyond surface of twig.

Stem: Very stout, more or less contorted; brown or slightly greenish, glabrous or often velvety downy; pith — wide, salmon - pink to brown.

Bark: Dark brown, roughened with their tortuous, recurved, scale like ridges.

Size: 60 to 75' in height by 40 to 50' in spread.

Rate: Slow to medium, growing 12 to 14' over a 10 year period.

Fruit: Reddish brown, leathery pod, 50 to 100" long, 1 1/2" to 2" wide, containing a few large blackish brown, hard-shelled seeds. Ripens in October, but hangs on the tree through the winter.

This tree is not to be placed near greens or tees due to the pods that drop, but placed deeper in the roughs or along the edges of the course. Gymnocladus dioicus — it kinds of rolls off the tongue once you get the hang of it.

Credit: "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants"  
by Michael A. Dirr

## Jack Frost

October and Jack Frost — They seem to go together. But there really is more to frost than meets the eye. Radiation frost occurs on clear, calm nights with no cloud cover to absorb the thermal energy from the earth. A large-scale air mass moving across an area may not alter the daytime temperature drastically, but will cause a "hard-freeze" that may be visible until mid morning. Advection frost can occur on a clear or cloudy night, but with a wind blowing. More noticeable temperature changes cause widespread freezing that is difficult to guard against. White frost, commonly called hoarfrost, occurs when ice crystals rather than dew, form on plant surfaces because the dewpoint, the temperature at which air reaches the saturation point, is below freezing. The opposite, black frost, occurs when there is not enough air moisture to form white frost, but the temperature drops low enough to actually freeze vegetation.

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