

Chinese vs. American Chestnut

(*Castanea mollissima* vs. *Castanea dentata*)

Top View

American Leaf (left):

Leaf is long in relation to its width

Large, prominent teeth on edge; bristle at the end of each tooth curves inward

Base of leaf blade tapers sharply

Leaf is very thin and papery

Chinese Leaf (right):

Leaf is oval-shaped

Teeth are smaller

Base of leaf blade is rounded

Leaf is thick and waxy-feeling



Burs and Nuts

American vs. Chinese



American Chestnut Burs:

A dense mass of long, slender spines

Spines are 2 to 3 cm long, 0.5 mm thick

Up to 3 nuts per bur

Chinese Chestnut Burs:

A sparse mass of short, thick spines

Spines are 1 to 2 cm long, 1 mm thick

Up to 3 nuts per bur



Chestnut Oak Leaves

**Chestnut and Chinkapin Leaves
Top of leaves**



Chinese vs. American Chestnut

Burs and Nuts

American vs. Chinese



American Chestnuts:

Nuts are relatively small, 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter

Tips of American chestnuts are pointed

Nuts are hairy over 1/3 to 2/3 of length from pointed end

Vascular bundles in a sunburst pattern on hilum end

2 to 3 nuts in each bur

Chinese Chestnuts:

Nuts are relatively large, 3/4 to 2 inches in diameter

Tips of Chinese chestnuts are rounded

Only the tips of the nuts are hairy

Vascular bundles in a diffuse pattern on hilum end

2 to 3 nuts in each bur

Bottom View

American Leaf (left):

Elongated leaf

Large, prominent teeth on edge; bristle on teeth curves inward

Blade tapers sharply to meet stem at base of leaf blade

Light green underside on leaves exposed to the sun

Chinese Leaf (right):

Oval-shaped leaf

Small teeth on edge

Base of leaf blade rounded

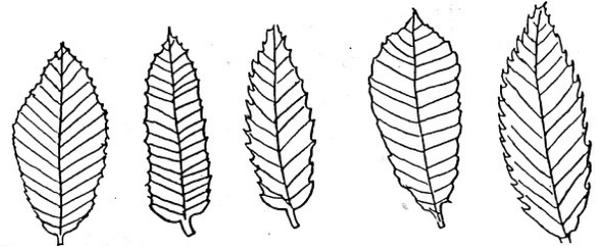
Underside of sun leaves look whitish because of many hairs



Chestnut Stems and Buds



From Left:
American, Chinese, European, and Japanese twigs
American twig: pointed bud at 45 degree angle from stem; smooth, reddish stem
Chinese twig: rounded, hairy buds, large stipules (leaf-like coverings over the buds), large lenticels (white "bumps" on stem)
European twig: thick stem, large buds
Japanese twig: pale, pinkish stem



Chinkapin	Japanese	European	Chinese	American
Leaf Taper to Stem				
Straight	Curved	Curved	Curved	Straight
Taper to Tip				
Straight	Curved	Curved	Curved	Straight
Teeth				
1-3 mm, small, sharp, no hook	Tiny, often only bristles, no hook	Big, sharp or rounded, no hook	Large or small, not pronounced or hooked	6 mm, big, sharp, and often curved (hooked)
Underside of Leaf				
Sun leaves hairy	Many large dots (glands), sun leaves hairy	Many small dots. Sun leaves hairy on some specimens but not others	Sparse dots. Sun leaves hairy.	Many small dots. Sun leaves not hairy, long sparse hairs only on midrib.
Twig				
Hairy tips, purple or brownish grey	Pink to light red, large white lenticels	Stout, dark, brown, small white lenticels	Hairy tips, tan to pea green. Large elliptical yellow lenticels	Slender, smooth, hairless reddish brown, small white lenticels
Bud				
Up to 3mm, downy dark red, pointed longer than wide, sticks out from stem	Glossy brown, as long as it is wide (rounded)	Dark red, fat and globular	Hairy, tan, dull rounded to black rounded and flat against stem	Up to 6mm, smooth, reddish brown to yellow, pointed, or longer than it is wide, sticks out from stem
Nut				
1 nut ½" tip pointed with a round cross section	2-3 nuts, 1-2 in. No sunburst pattern at base, moderate brown	2-3 nuts, 1-2 in. No sunburst pattern, dark brown black stripes	2-3 nuts, ¾ - 2 in, rounded hairy tip, sunburst pattern uncommon, often lt. brown	2-3 nuts, ½ - 1 in., pointed tip, top 1/3 to 2/3 downy, sunburst at base
Taste				
Sweet	Not sweet	Starchy	Sweet	Sweet
Resistance to blight				
None	Moderate	Slight	High	Low to None

Bottom of leaves (Reverse side)

Top Row: Allegheny chinkapin leaf

Bottom row (from left): American, Chinese, European and Japanese Chestnut leaves

Chestnut and Chinkapin Burs

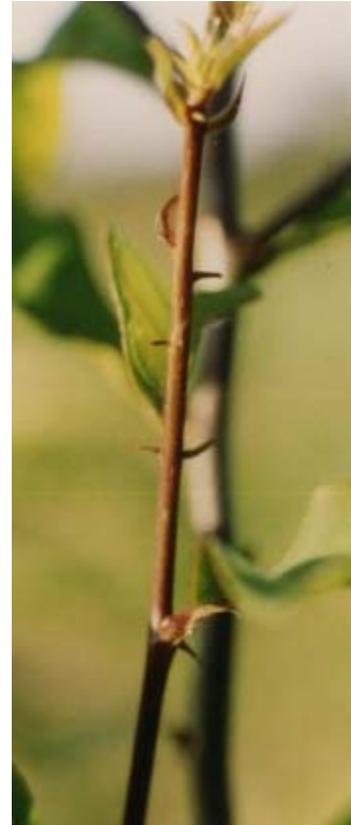


Clockwise from top:

Allegheny chinkapin, European chestnut,
Japanese chestnut, Chinese chestnut,
and American chestnut burs

Note that the Chinese bur looks small,
even though the nuts inside are large.
This is because of their short, stubby
spines.

Stipules



American Stipules

Slender

Angle sharply
out from stem

Usually fall off
in June

Chestnut and Chinkapin Nuts



Top and Side Views of Chestnuts

From Left: American, Chinese, Japanese, and European chestnuts



American Buds and Lenticels

Pointed buds that angle away from the stem

Stems smooth and hairless

Stem color reddish brown to dark green

Small but numerous lenticels on stem

Buds and Stems



Chinese Stipules

Broad

Cover the buds

**Remain on the
stem through
September**



Chestnuts

Chestnut burrs have two sutures and open into four valves (sections)

There are up to three nuts per bur.



Chinkapins

Chinkapin burrs have one suture and open into two valves (sections).

There is only a single nut per bur.

Buds and Stems



Chinese Buds and Lenticels

Rounded buds that hug the stem

Hairy stems and hairy leaf veins

Stem color tan to pea-green

Large lenticels (bumps) on stem

Chestnut and Chinkapin Nuts



Top: Chinkapin nuts: note the pointed end

Middle: American chestnuts: note the hairy surface

Bottom: Chinese chestnuts: note the rounded end