



Shagbark hickory bark peels away as vertical strips.
PHOTO BY KEN MOORE



Bark of white oak peels away from the side.
PHOTO BY KEN MOORE

FLORA
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big sweetgums; in contrast to the sourwoods, you'll find them reaching straight up high into the canopy and exhibiting a lighter, grayish bark that's not nearly as deeply grooved as the sourwood's. The barks of some trees are so steadfastly true and distinctive that one can almost always recognize those trees. Both white oak and shagbark hickory are readily identified by their distinctive peeling or scaling bark. It's easy to distinguish between the two.

The grayish bark of the oak peels or sloughs away

from the tree horizontally. In contrast, the bark of the shagbark hickory peels off in thin vertical strips, with the lower and upper ends pulled away as though the center were glued to the trunk. Though it may take some thoughtful observation to discern this, the difference is really evident when you find the two in proximity. (Compare in photo.)

Shagbark hickory is not as common as white oak, but can be spotted beside oaks along some trails in our area. If you're observant, you'll find the two trees side by side at the Mason Farm Biological Reserve and along Trail 11 in Duke Forest's

Durham Division.

The beauty and interesting characteristics of some plants are more noticeable now than at any other time. One can look across forest contours and admire giant tree stems that are obscured in the overwhelming greenery of summer.

The snow-white upper trunks and limbs of sycamores along streams and rivers are one of winter's most beautiful and easily recognizable features. Now is the perfect time to enjoy outdoor explorations and meet new tree friends.

Email Ken Moore at flora@carrborocitizen.com.



Rock mason James Blacknell Jr., 1984

Every child who ever romped on the old stone walls on campus should thank this man. When I photographed 80-year-old James Blacknell Jr. in 1984, he'd been laying rock at UNC for 66 years. "Yeah, there ain't too many (stones) around the university campus that I didn't have something to do with." As he was laying more Chatham gray granite at a home in New Hope, the master rock mason reflected on how it all started: "My daddy was in charge of the grounds up on campus, and they couldn't find no mason anywhere. I wasn't quite 15 at the time.... My daddy give me a liddlebiddy ol' pointin' trowel, and I just went to doin' it." To borrow a phrase: Now let us praise famous men.



A THOUSAND WORDS
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