



# Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

**Common Name:** Black locust  
**Scientific Name:** *Robinia pseudoacacia*  
**Plant Family:** Fabaceae

**Identifying Characteristics:**

**Size:** medium-sized deciduous tree

**Leaves:** The pinnately compound leaves are 10 to 35 cm (8 to 14 in) long, with 7 to 19 short stalked leaflets. Those leaflets are dull green colored and ovoid or oval shaped. They are 2.5 to 5 cm (1 to 2 in) long, thin, scabrous (rough/scaly) above and pale below.

**Flowers:** The separate male and female trees have sweetly fragrant flowers. They are creamy white colored and bean-like arranged in a pyramidal spike. The flower clusters are 10 to 20 cm (4 to 8 in) long and the individual flowers have five petals.

**Bark:** The bark is deeply furrowed and dark reddish-brown to black in color. It has an alternate branching pattern, which creates a zigzag effect. A pair of sharp thorns grows at each node. They are 1.25 to 2 cm (0.5 to 0.75 in) long, and very stout.

**Habitat:** Black locust can live on a wide variety of soil types, but grows best on sites that are deep, well drained, and derived from limestone.

**Bloom time:** Late spring

Information sources:  
USDA ([plants.usda.gov/plantguide](http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide))  
Uconn Plant Database ([www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/](http://www.hort.uconn.edu/plants/))

**Did you know?** The wood of black locust is strong, hard, and extremely durable. It is very useful for fencing, mine timbers, and landscaping ties. The tree also serves as a good erosion control plant on critical and highly disturbed areas, due to its ease of establishment, rapid early growth and spread, and soil building abilities. In some regions it is considered invasive.



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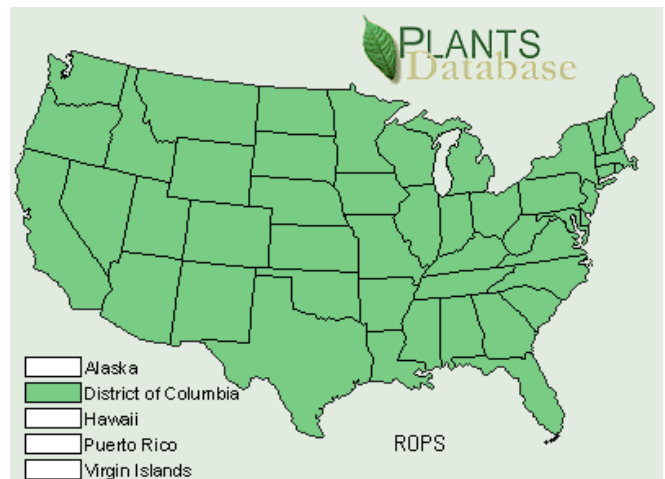


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**Phenological observation:**  
Budburst/First Leaf, First Flower

**Distribution Area:**



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database ([plants.usda.gov](http://plants.usda.gov))