

# Oak – Hickory Forest

## State Rank S1

### Community Description

This dry forest type, characteristic of the Central Appalachian Mountains, occurs in small patches or as inclusions within broader expanses of oak-pine forest. It is dominated by a mixture of shagbark hickory and oaks (white, black, red, or chestnut) over park-like sedge lawn. Sugar maple, white pine, or white ash may be canopy associates, and hop-hornbeam is a characteristic sub-canopy species. Additional species in the subcanopy or tall-shrub layer may include witch hazel, shadbushes, striped maple, and maple-leaved viburnum. Low shrubs can include blueberries, and the herb layer is primarily a lawn of woodland sedge with some other grass and sedge species. Moderately enriched sites may support tick-trefoils, hepatica, and the rare bottlebrush grass.

### Soil and Site Characteristics

Sites occur on low-elevation, south- or west-facing sideslopes with well-drained loams or sandy loams. Known sites are within 10 miles of the coast.



Shagbark Hickory Bud

### Diagnostics

Moderately open to closed canopy forests are dominated by a mixture of shagbark hickory (at least 30% cover) and oak species.

### Similar Types

White Oak – Red Oak Forests and Oak - Pine Forests lack shagbark hickory.

### Conservation, Wildlife, and Management Considerations

The few mature sites known in Maine were probably cleared in the past. Sites are small and subject to further fragmentation from development. Community dynamics are not well known, but there are some indications that shagbark hickory and white oak are

adapted to disturbance  
– likely fire  
– though there is no research on this topic in Maine. Most occurrences of this type are on private lands.



Bitternut Hickory Bark

This type offers habitat for a variety of birds, including scarlet tanager and ovenbird. Mature occurrences of this community type offer excellent potential sites for cavity dwellers such as the southern flying squirrel. The rare red-winged sallow moth uses red oak as one of its host plants and may be found in this community.

### Distribution

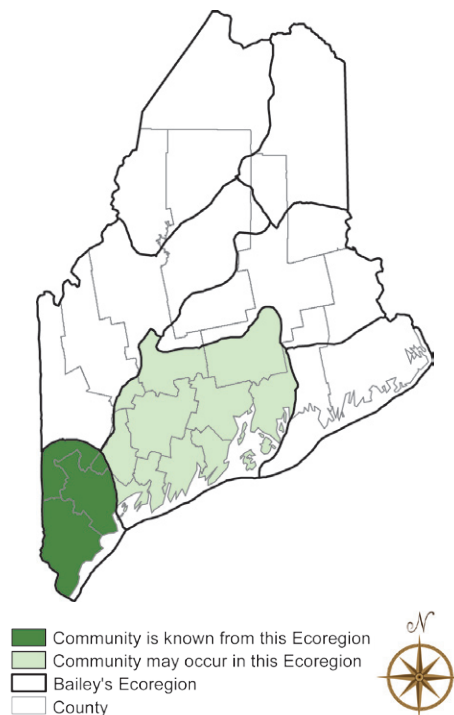
Restricted to southern and coastal Maine, characteristic of the Eastern Broadleaf Forest Province. Extends south and west from Maine.

Landscape Pattern: Small patch (in Maine), generally 20 acres or less.



Bitternut Hickory Leaves

### Location Map



### Characteristic Plants

These plants are frequently found in this community type. Those with an asterisk are often diagnostic of this community.

#### Canopy

Black oak  
Red oak\*  
Shagbark hickory\*  
Sugar maple  
White oak

#### Sapling/Shrub

Low-bush blueberry  
Maple-leaved viburnum\*  
Shadbushes  
Witch hazel\*

#### Herb

Asters  
Canada mayflower  
Carex (Laxiflorae group)  
Panic grasses  
Sarsaparilla  
Silverrod  
Whorled loosestrife\*  
Wild oats  
Woodland sedge\*

### Associated Rare Plants

Bitternut hickory  
Bottlebrush grass  
Chestnut oak  
Scarlet oak

### Associated Rare Animals

Red-winged sallow  
Whip-poor-will