

297. *ROBINIA PSEUDOACACIA* L. (FABACEAE) — Black Locust, False Acacia

According to Grieve, this is “one of the most valuable timber trees of the American forest, where it grows to a very large size.”<sup>2</sup> It was one of the first trees introduced into England from America, and is cultivated as an ornamental tree in the milder parts of Britain. It is great for posts, but one of the hardest of American woods and very difficult to work (640 to 800 kg/m<sup>3</sup>, 15% moisture). Amerindians and Asian Indians report that the seeds are edible. Watt and Breyer-Brandwijk suggest that the seeds left in fruits hanging on the trees may still be edible, after processing.<sup>3</sup> Frankly, I am reluctant to experiment with this as a food source. Seeds are also suggested as a coffee substitute.<sup>3</sup> *Robinia*, dangerous as it is, can serve as a vegetable rennet. The essential oil from the flowers has been used as a spice, in sherberts and toilet waters. Wood is suitable for agricultural implements, tool handles, shoe lasts, sports goods, dowels and pins for insulators on telephone and telegraph wires, tree nails, boat ribs, brackets, sleepers, and sills. It is used also for light construction, gates, wagon hubs, cart wheels, shipbuilding, furniture, and turnery work. Burrs from the trees provide attractive wood for tabletops and music cabinets. Robinetin is a strong dyestuff yielding with different mordants different shades similar to those obtained with fisetin, quercetin, and myricetin; with aluminum mordant, it dyes cotton to a brown-orange shade.<sup>1</sup> Country folk in the U.S. once macerated the leaves in water as a fly killer.<sup>63</sup>

Reported to be astringent, cholagogue, diuretic, emetic, emollient, laxative, *poison*, pro-tisticidal, purgative, sedative, tonic, and viricidal, black locust is a folk remedy for