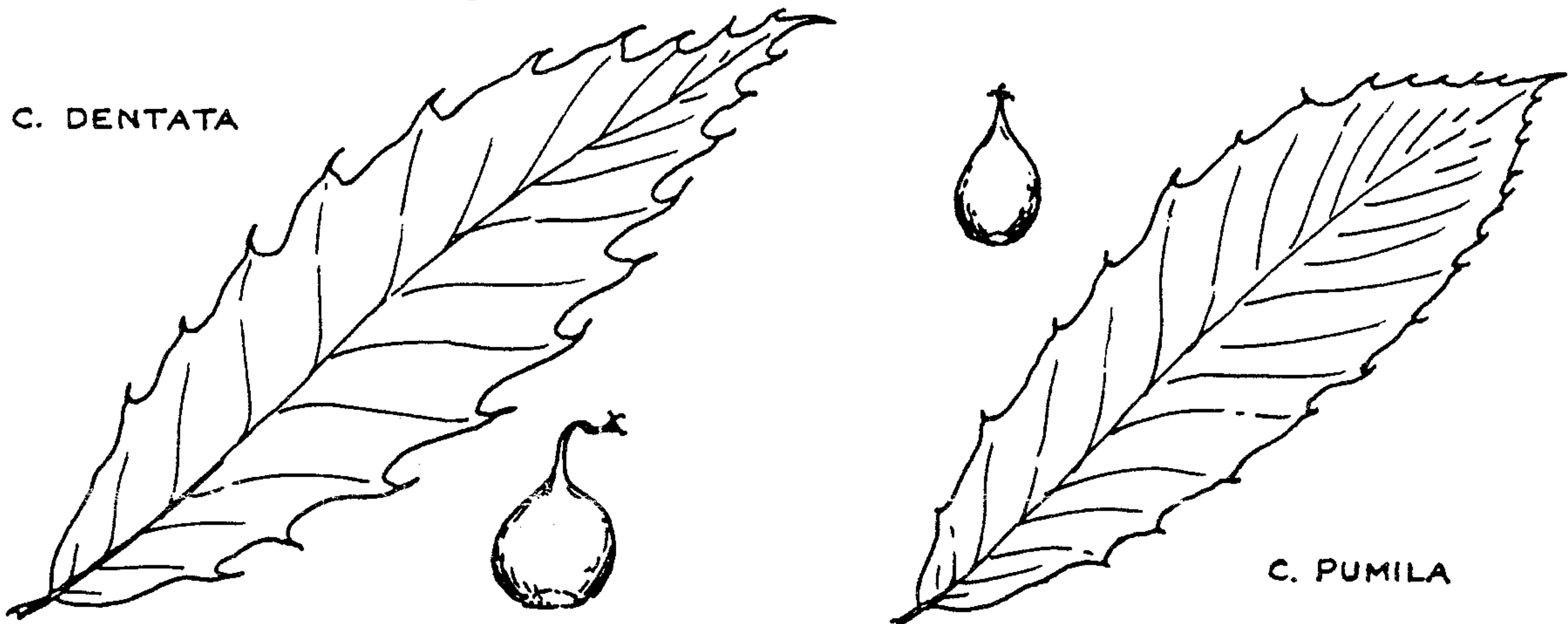


# LOOK AGAIN !

As we walk through today's forests of oaks, hickories, beeches and maples it seems impossible that only a lifetime ago one-quarter of these trees would have been American Chestnuts. Yet when we look about we see ample evidence of this majestic species' prevalence before it was virtually wiped out by a lethal alien blight. A few silvery gray boles still stand erect; many more lie prostrate but are astonishingly sound. Even more abundant are old stumps ringed by vigorous, persistent sprouts that arise from the unaffected roots, some managing to produce spiny burs before succumbing.



The leaves of American Chestnut (Castanea dentata) have a distinctive look of sharpness about them, owing to the large bristle-tipped saw-teeth that give it its specific name and the long, attenuated apex. Beneath, they are pale yellowish green, smooth and shiny.

Sometimes mistaken for it is the related Allegheny Chinquapin (Castanea pumila), a shrub or at most a small tree. Here the leaves tend to be broader nearer the summit, and narrow more abruptly to a short tip, and the teeth are smaller. The undersides are whitened with a dense covering of soft woolly hairs.

When fruits are present, the two species can be easily differentiated. Chestnut burs are two inches or more in diameter, and each contains two or three nuts which are flattened on at least one side. In Allegheny Chinquapin, they are smaller and contain a single rounded nut.

Dick Smith