

Quercus alba Linnaeus

White oak

eastern white oak,
stave oak,
forked-leaf white oak

GROWTH FORM: popular and long-lived shade tree, which grows to 100 feet (30.5 m), with a wide-spreading rounded crown and with numerous horizontal branches. **BARK:** light gray, shallow furrows forming scaly ridges or plates. **TWIGS and BUDS:** slender to stout, gray to reddish-green

twigs with star-shaped pith; buds are reddish-brown and broadly oval and hairless. **LEAVES:** petiole $\frac{3}{8}$ - 1 inch (10 - 25 mm) in length; obovate to elliptical leaves, 4 - 8 inches (101 - 203 mm) long, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ - 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches (70 - 121 mm) wide, margin with 5 - 9 lobes that are widest beyond middle, deep sinuses extending a third or more to midrib; base acute to cuneate, apex broadly rounded; dull or shiny grayish green above, light green with slight pubescence which becomes smooth



beneath as they mature.

ACORNS: annual; 1 - 3 acorns on peduncle up to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (32 mm) long, light gray pubescent cup, enclosing $\frac{1}{4}$ of the nut; light brown, oblong nut, up to 1 inch (25 mm) long; germinates in the fall after dropping to the ground. **HABITAT:** dry upland slopes to well-drained loam in bottomlands;

may grow as a shrub at 4,500 feet (1,372 m) elevation in the southern Appalachian Mountains and reaches maximum potential height on lower slopes of the Allegheny Mountains and bottomlands of the Ohio Basin.



DISTRIBUTION: eastern Canada and the United States from Quebec and Ontario west to Minnesota, south to Texas, east to Florida, and north to Maine.



COMMENTARY: White oak is one of the most important species in the white oak group. The wood is used for furniture, flooring, and specialty items such as wine and whiskey barrels. Used for shipbuilding in colonial times. Continues to be displaced in the market place by several species of red oaks. Acorns are a favorite food source for birds, squirrels, and deer. Used as medication by Native Americans. The largest known white oak specimen had a circumference of 32 feet and grew in the Wye Oak State Park, Talbot County, Maryland. It was destroyed during a storm on June 6, 2002.