

Oak - *Quercus bicolor*

Quercus bicolor – “Swamp oak”

Habitat.

- Native to north central and northeastern mixed forests
- An excellent shade tree for any landscape.
- Hardiness zone 5 - 8

Habit and Form

- *Quercus bicolor* grows fairly rapidly and can reach 50 to 70 feet tall and live up to 285 years.
- Canopy width is typically 50-60 feet, broad and round
- Bicolor oak has a simple leaf, 5" to 6" in length, broad at the middle (pear-shaped) and wedge-shaped at their base.

Summer Foliage

- The lustrous, lobed leaves have a two-tone appearance, dark green on top with a silvery-white underside

Autumn Foliage

- Fall color is an orange-gold to yellow in mid-autumn, brown later on

Flowers

- Insignificant flowering occurs in the spring in the form of catkins and short spikes
- Brown acorns ripen in fall, about 1 inch long, less than an inch wide

Bark

- Swamp oak is known for its attractive bark that is thick, and deeply divided by fissures into broad ridges. The bark is a grayish-brown on the trunk. The bark on the twigs is ragged and, on younger trees, peeling.

Culture

- Prefers full sun and moist, well-drained, acidic soil
- Tolerates alkaline soil, clay soil, dry sites
- Tolerates occasional drought and/or flooding, road salt, wet sites

Ecosystem services

- The acorns of the oak are a popular food source for small and game mammals. Used by songbirds and migrant birds as well.

Landscape Uses

- An excellent shade tree

Liabilities

- Can be messy due to its acorn production.
- Can be difficult to transplant and establish.
- Common problems are anthracnose, canker, leaf spot, rust, blight, galls, caterpillars, borers, leaf miners, oak lace bug, and oak mite. Susceptible to chlorosis (yellowing of the leaves while the veins remain green) when soils are not properly acidic.