

Quercus nuttallii: Nuttall Oak¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

Introduction

This native North American deciduous tree is capable of reaching 100 to 120 feet in height but is more often seen at 60 to 80 feet. The dull, dark green, lobed leaves are 4 to 8 inches long and 2 to 5 inches wide. The small, reddish-brown acorns are 0.75 to 1.25 inches long. The bark is dark, grey/brown, and divided into broad, flat plates.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Quercus nuttallii*: nuttall oak
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

General Information

Scientific name: *Quercus nuttallii*

Pronunciation: KWERK-us nuh-TALL-ee-eye

Common name(s): Nuttall oak

Family: *Fagaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 8B (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: highway median; street without sidewalk; specimen; shade; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn > 6 ft wide

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 60 to 80 feet

Spread: 35 to 50 feet

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Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: round
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: moderate
Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed, parted
Leaf shape: ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red
Fall characteristic: showy

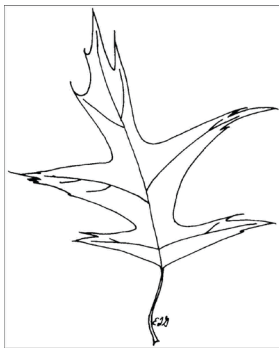


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: brown
Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval, round
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch, 1 to 3 inches
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; not showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns
Pruning requirement: little required
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green, brown
Current year twig thickness: thin, medium
Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem
Winter interest: no
Outstanding tree: yes
Ozone sensitivity: unknown
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant
Pest resistance: unknown

Use and Management

Nuttall oak should be grown in full sun on any soil and is very tolerant of poorly-drained, wet sites. This should make it well suited for the soil conditions found at many urban sites. If landscape nurseries grew this tree more often, it would be specified for poorly-drained urban and suburban landscape sites.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.