



Quercus cerris Turkey Oak¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Turkey Oak is a fast-growing deciduous tree capable of reaching 130 feet in height, but mostly seen at 30 to 50 feet tall and wide (Fig. 1). The 2.5 to 5-inch-long leaves are covered with a fine fuzz on both upper and lower surfaces. The one-inch-long acorns are set into big, woolly cups, and ripen in October. They germinate readily in a moist landscape. The attractive, ridged and furrowed bark reveals an orange color within its fissures. The trunk can grow to at least three or four feet in diameter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Quercus cerris*

Pronunciation: KWERK-us SAIR-iss

Common name(s): Turkey Oak, Moss-Cupped Oak

Family: *Fagaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 7 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

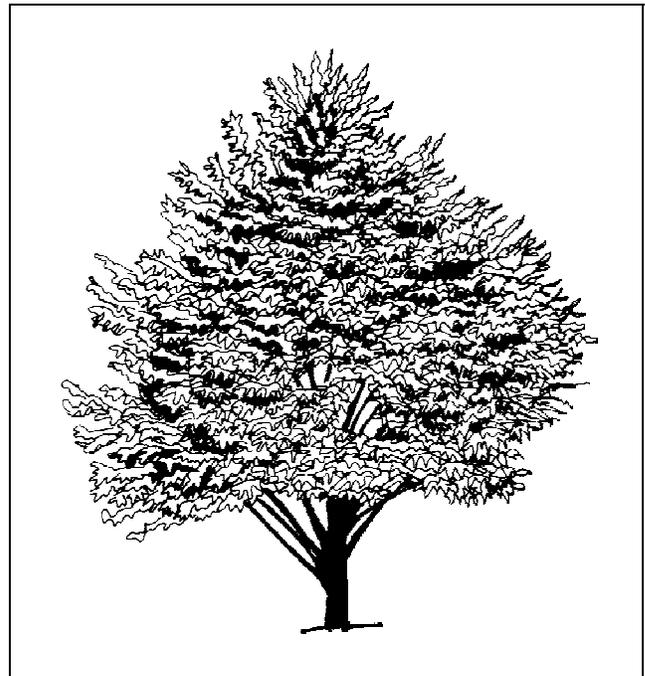


Figure 1. Middle-aged Turkey Oak.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 50 feet

Spread: 30 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-544, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** lobed; dentate
- Leaf shape:** oblong
- Leaf venation:** pinnate
- Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** brown; yellow
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower color:** brown
- Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** oval; round
- Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch
- Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
- Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
- Breakage:** resistant
- Current year twig color:** brown
- Current year twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** high
- Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

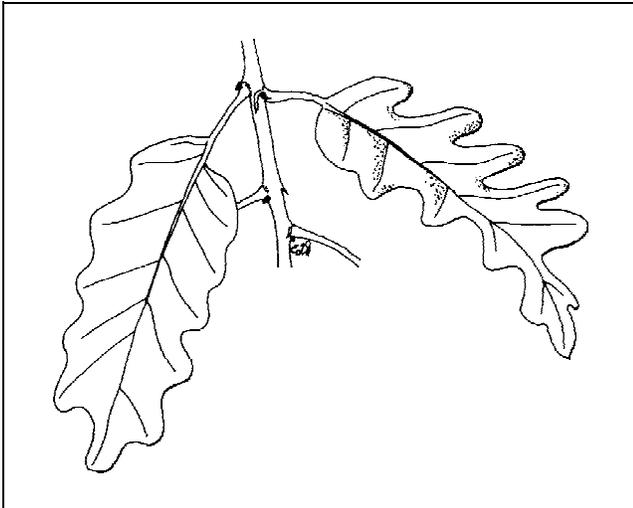


Figure 3. Foliage of Turkey Oak.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Older specimens often develop a wide-spreading, multi-trunked form making it a great tree for climbing or for use as a specimen. Young specimens are observed growing with a straight central leader with well-spaced major branches. This should be a very durable landscape tree in the south.

Turkey Oak should be grown in full sun or partial shade but tolerates almost any soil except wet ones. It grows well on sandy ridges and is salt-tolerant. Surprisingly, this tree is not grown in the trade and is not available. But its extreme drought tolerance, ability to thrive in poor, clay soil and attractive habit make it most worthy of use in urban areas. It might make a good street tree for southern cities.

Propagation is by seed.