



Quercus lyrata Overcup Oak¹

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INTRODUCTION

Overcup Oak grows slowly, sometimes to more than 100 feet in height in its native habitat but is more often seen 30 to 40 feet high and wide, forming a rounded silhouette with an open crown, large-diameter branches, and a twisted trunk (Fig. 1). The dark green, leathery, lobed leaves have fuzzy, white undersides and turn a rich brown color before dropping in fall. The nuts or acorns which are produced are quite popular with squirrels, turkeys, wild hogs and deer. The rough, reddish or gray/brown bark is attractive and is worthy of display with night-time lighting.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Quercus lyrata*

Pronunciation: KWERK-us lye-RAY-tuh

Common name(s): Overcup Oak

Family: *Fagaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; shade tree; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance

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

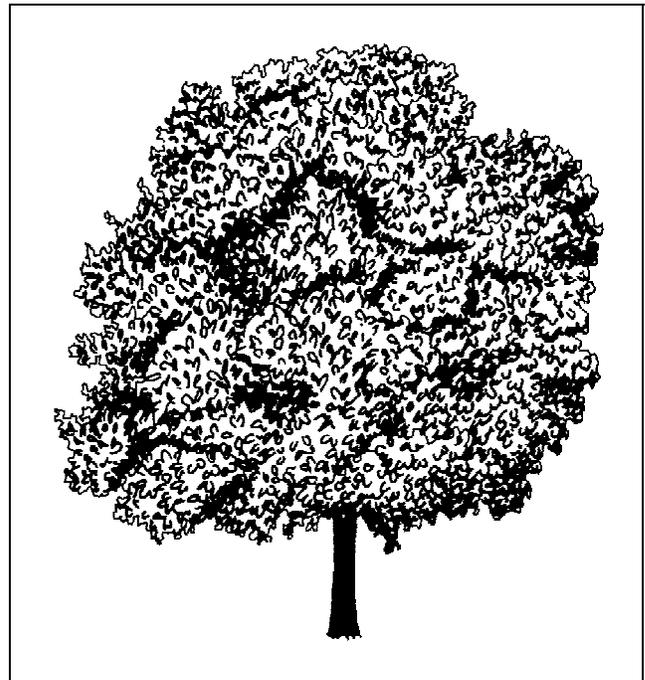


Figure 1. Middle-aged Overcup Oak.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

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

Crown shape: oval; round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

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

Flower

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

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** 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:** grow mostly upright and will not droop; not particularly showy; 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; gray
- Current year twig thickness:** thick
- Wood specific gravity:** 0.63

Culture

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

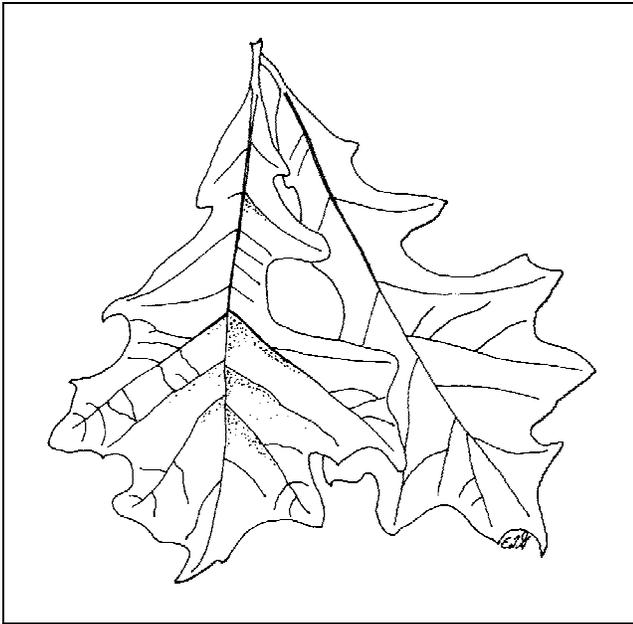


Figure 3. Foliage of Overcup Oak.

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: not particularly outstanding

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

This oak should be grown with a single trunk and a few widely-spaced branches to mimic its growth habit in the wild. The first permanent branch can be located three to five feet from the ground if the tree will be planted in an open lawn area and allowed to develop a wide crown. For those planted as street trees or in areas requiring clearance for vehicles or pedestrians, the first permanent branch should be higher on the trunk. The interior portion of the crown often cleans itself of small branches, displaying the nice branch arrangement common on most specimens.

Overcup Oak should be grown in full sun or partial shade on almost any soil, tolerating wet, poorly drained sites or acid, sandy soils. It would be well suited for planting in poorly-drained urban sites, but is not normally available at landscape nurseries.