



Quercus stellata Post Oak¹

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INTRODUCTION

This 40 to 50-foot-tall deciduous tree creates a dense, rounded canopy of spreading, twisted branches, but is not cultivated in nurseries (Fig. 1). The four to six-inch-long by three to four-inch-wide, shiny, dark green leaves are deeply lobed and appear somewhat in the shape of a Maltese cross. Only rarely do the leaves change to a golden brown in the fall before dropping. The one-half to one-inch-long acorns are quite popular with squirrels and other wildlife. Old trees growing on good soil form a wonderful silhouette in the winter, with large-diameter, curving branches growing from a sinuous trunk.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Quercus stellata*

Pronunciation: KWERK-us stell-AY-tuh

Common name(s): Post Oak

Family: *Fagaceae*

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

Origin: native to North America

Uses: recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; reclamation plant; shade tree; specimen; no proven urban tolerance

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

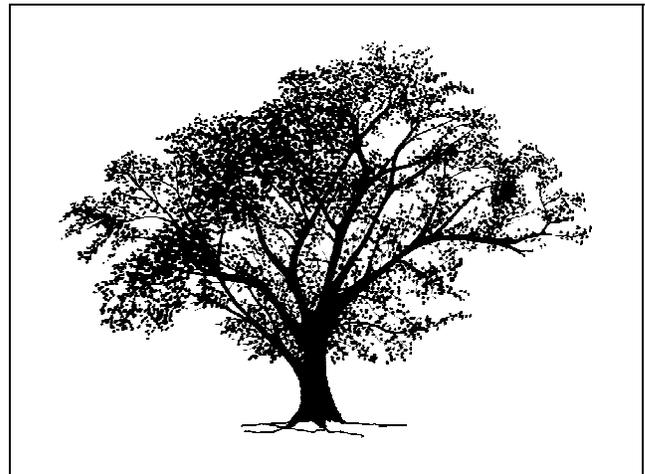


Figure 1. Mature Post Oak.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 40 to 50 feet

Spread: 35 to 50 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: round

Crown density: open

Growth rate: medium

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed; parted

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate; reticulate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

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: oval; round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

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; gray

Current year twig thickness: thick

Wood specific gravity: 0.67

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

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

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

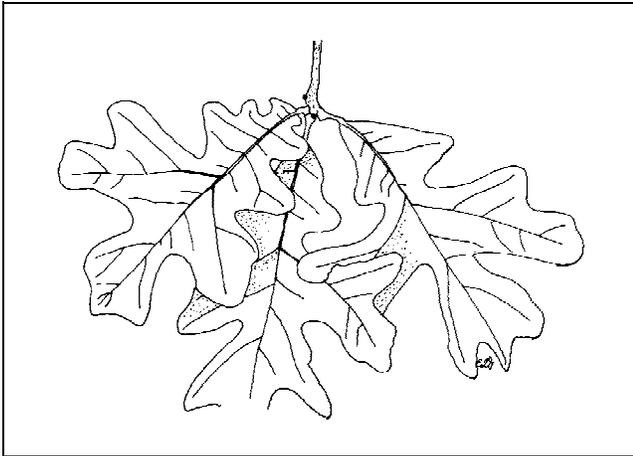


Figure 3. Foliage of Post Oak.

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Most often found on dry, low-fertility, sandy soils, Post Oak is extremely drought-tolerant. Trees should be located in full sun. Native trees are very sensitive to soil compaction, drainage changes and soil disturbance. Do not disturb the soil beneath the canopy on a construction site if the tree is to be saved.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern but the tree occasionally succumbs to Chestnut blight. There are many other potential problems on Oaks but none are normally serious. Post Oak is susceptible to oak wilt.