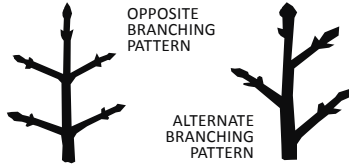


TREE OF THE MONTH

Scarlet Oak • *Quercus coccinea*

RED OAK • BLACK OAK • SPANISH OAK

Scarlet oak is a medium-sized tree native to eastern and central North America. Scarlet oaks are popular landscape trees because of their fast growth and brilliant autumn color. Scarlet oak grows on sandy and acidic soils, reaching 20-30 meters in height with an open, rounded crown and an alternate branching pattern. Scarlet oaks are fast-growing, shade-intolerant trees that often associate with black oaks (*Quercus velutina*) and red oaks (*Quercus rubra*).



POINTY LEAVES

The leaves are shiny with deep, rounded sinuses, and each lobe has three teeth on the tip. The leaves turn bright scarlet in autumn. Characteristically for oaks, the buds are clustered around the terminal bud at the end of the twig. Each bud is covered with whitish hairs on the upper half. The inner bark is pinkish brown and, unusually for oaks, is not bitter.

SPRING BLOOMERS

Scarlet oaks flower in mid-spring, often May, and bear drooping male catkins (clusters) and female flowers singly or in groups of two or three. Acorns develop later in the season in singles or pairs and drop in late Autumn.

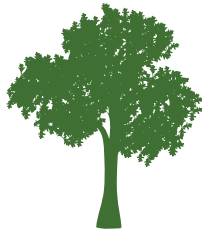
FOOD FOR ALL

Scarlet oak acorns are popular for many wildlife species, from squirrels, mice, and chipmunks, to deer, wild turkeys, and woodpeckers, and jays.

TRICKY FELLOW

Quercus coccinea is often be confused with the northern red oak (*Quercus rubra*), black oak (*Quercus velutina*) and pin oak (*Quercus palustris*).





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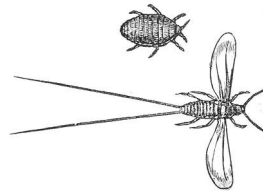


Native Mexican Collecting Cochineal

ETYMOLOGY Scarlet oak's species epithet (name), *coccinea*, comes from the Latin *coccinus* meaning scarlet-colored. Many plants and animals bearing distinctively red markings have names related to *coccinea*, including the cochineal beetle. Native to the southwestern United States, Mexico, Central and South America, the cochineal beetle produces carminic acid which deters predators. This carminic acid makes up between 17-24% of a dried cochineal's dried weight, which can be extracted to make carmine dye or cochineal red.

Historically, carmine dye was used by both Mayan and Aztec cultures to color textiles. After European colonization, cochineal was especially popular in Central American fabric exports. Today, Carmine is mostly used as coloring or in lipstick (E120 or Natural Red 4).

Dactylopius coccus
Cochineal Beetle



Carmine pigment



Benefits of Urban Trees
Research has linked the presence of urban trees to...

The Nature Conservancy

- REDUCING RATES** of cardiac disease, strokes, and asthma due to improved air quality
- PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY** including habitat for migrating birds and pollinators
- REDUCING OBESITY LEVELS** by increasing physical activity including walking and cycling
- MANAGING STORMWATER**, keeping pollutants out of waterways, and reducing urban flooding
- INCREASING** neighborhood property values
- REDUCING STRESS** by helping interrupt thought patterns that lead to anxiety and depression
- Cooling** city streets by 2-4° F, reducing deaths from heat and cutting energy use
- FILTERING** up to a third of fine particle pollutants within 300 yards of a tree

Tree of the Month is a collaboration between BEAT, the City of Pittsfield and Pittsfield Tree Watch. The Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) works to protect the environment for wildlife and in support of the natural systems that sustain us all. Find out more at thebeatnews.org.

