



TREE OF THE MONTH

The Oaks : QUERCUS MACROCARPA • QUERCUS ALBA
QUERCUS BICOLOR • QUERCUS RUBRA • QUERCUS VELUNTINA

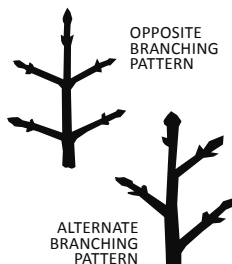
RED OAK | *Quercus rubra* | Can grow up to 100 feet tall. One of the most common trees found in their range. Lobed leaves with pointed tips. Red oaks often associate with sugar maple, beech, yellow birch, red maple, white ash, eastern white pine, eastern hemlock, and northern white cedar. Species epithet, *rubra*, refers to the sometimes red leaf venation and the reddish hue of the inner bark often seen in spring.

BLACK OAK | *Quercus velutina* | Can grow up to 80 feet tall. Lobed leaves with pointed tips. Like their cousin the pin oak, black oak can be identified by descending lower branches and ascending upper branches. Unlike pin oak, dead lower branches are usually not persistent. Black oak associates with white pine, scarlet oak, shagbark hickory, and red maple. Bark can be used to make a bright yellow dye.

BUR OAK | *Quercus macrocarpa* | Can grow over 100 feet tall with thick trunks. Long-lived, can reach over 400 years old. Lobed leaves with blunt tips. Acorns have notable fringed caps, resembling burdock. Bur oaks are highly tolerant of urban environments and stresses, including salt and drought. Can be confused with white oak, *Quercus alba*. The two often grow together in lowlands and can hybridize.

WHITE OAK | *Quercus alba* | Can grow over 100 feet tall. In open environments white oaks grow thick, short trunks and broad, spreading crowns. In forests, they have straight, tall trunks with no persistent lower branches. Deep taproots anchor trees in high winds. Lobed leaves with rounded tips. Also called *stave oak*, the timber has been traditionally used to make barrels. Species epithet, *alba*, refers to the lighter colored bark.

SWAMP WHITE OAK | *Quercus bicolor* | Can grow up to 100 feet tall and live over 300 years. Leaves have rounded lobes and shallow sinuses (indentations along the margins), although sinus can be deep on some leaves, especially close to the stem. Species epithet, *bicolor*, meaning two-toned, describes the leaves that are shiny, dark green on top with whitish, finely-haired undersides. Used by many Native American peoples for both medical and textile purposes. Tannins extracted from galls can create textile and leather dyes. The galls can also be used to treat hemorrhages, chronic diarrhea, and dysentery.



The 5 oaks listed here are native to central and eastern North America.

Oaks have an alternate branching pattern.

Oaks are part of the beech family (Fagacaceae). Beech family trees are notable in winter because they can hold on to their dried, brown leaves even until spring in the northeast.

Oaks have both male and female flowers on the same tree (monoecious). Male flowers are arranged on catkins (drooping stalks) while female flowers bloom on shorter, upright spikes.

RED OAK GROUP
Pointed lobes; cool, mesic, well-drained soils, often upland

WHITE OAK GROUP
Rounded lobes; prefer rich lowlands but can tolerate uplands



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Tree of the Month is a collaboration between BEAT, the City of Pittsfield, Pittsfield Tree Watch, and the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation's Greening the Gateway Cities Program. Find out more at thebeatnews.org.

