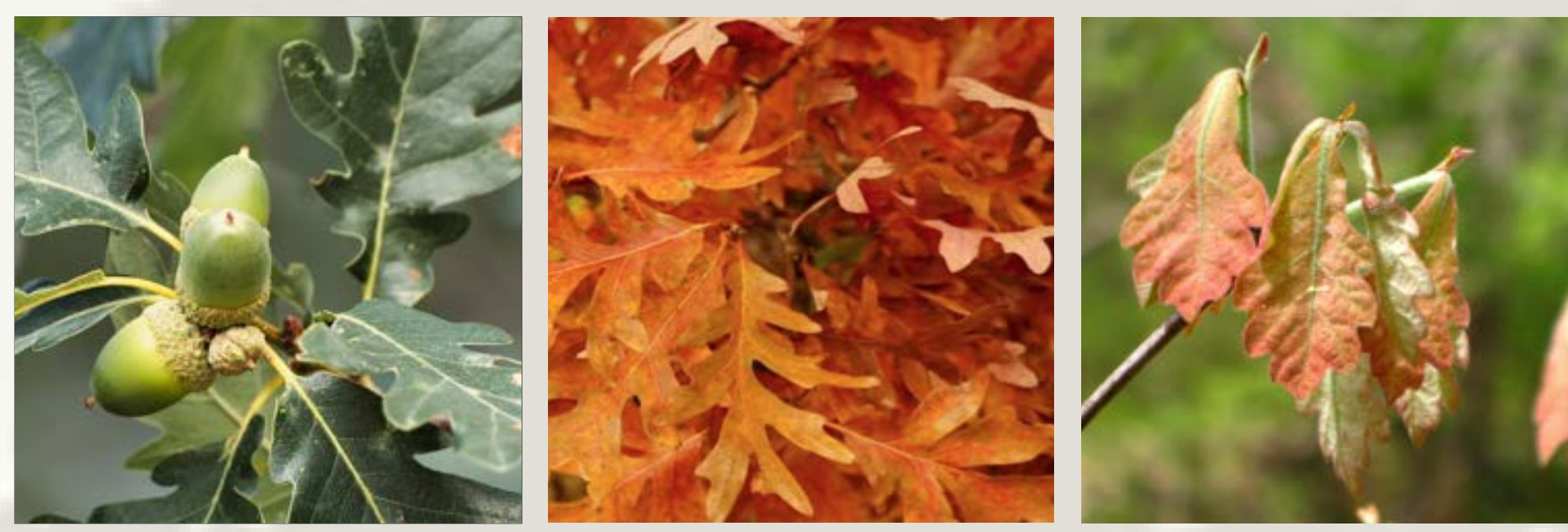




DEEPLY ROOTED

the extraordinary benefits of trees

White Oak *Quercus alba*



Native Range

Eastern to Central North America

Description

The white oak is a large, imposing specimen. It has a short, stocky trunk with massive horizontal limbs forming an upright, broad-rounded crown. Though the bark is light ashy gray, its name comes from the color of the finished wood. In spring, its leaves are delicate, silvery pink, and covered with a soft blanket-like down with long, yellowish-green catkins drooping in clusters; in summer, the leaves are dark green to slightly blue-green, and in fall, brown and wine-red to orange-red. Acorns are produced generally when the trees are between 50 to 100 years old, though open-grown trees may produce as early as 20 years.

Pollination

Oaks are pollinated through the wind.

Environmental Benefits

Acorns are wonderful wildlife food, especially for blue jays, turkeys, wood ducks, pheasants, grackles, nuthatches, thrushes, woodpeckers, insects, and other animals such as rabbits. Oaks support many caterpillar species in the spring, when birds need to feed their young.

Environmental Concerns

Acorns deteriorate quickly after ripening, and as acorns are prime food for wildlife, all acorns may be consumed in years of small crops, leaving none that would become new trees. White oak is less susceptible to oak wilt than the red oak species. Older trees are very sensitive to construction disturbances. Mature oaks on upland sites can be damaged by sudden competition from excessive irrigation of newly planted lawns.

History

It is a long-lived tree, with a specimen called the Great White Oak in Basking Ridge, NJ, estimated to be over 600 years old when it died in 2016. It is the State Tree of Connecticut because of the legend that the Charter Oak of Hartford, CT was where Connecticut's Royal Charter of 1662 was hidden from a later English governor-general, who sought to confiscate this symbol of the Connecticut Colony's independence.

Size

It grows to a height of 50' to 80' and a spread of 50' to 80' at maturity: as wide as it is tall.

Ease of Tree Care

Adapts to a variety of soil textures, but prefers deep, moist, well-drained sites. This tree grows at a slow to medium rate.

Where to Plant

Full sun with moderate tolerance to partial shade. High pH soil will cause yellow leaves due to chlorosis, the inability of a plant to make sufficient chlorophyll. An oak's deep tap root can make transplanting difficult. Transplant when young, but not near driveways as an oak's root base will become large and does not like compaction.

