



Bur Oak - *Quercus macrocarpa*

Description: Bur oak has the largest acorns of all native oaks and is very drought resistant. It is also pollution tolerant and serves as a good urban tree. The species name *macrocarpa* refers to the golf ball sized acorns. The acorns become an important source of food to wildlife. The wood is commercially valuable. The comparative ease with which bur oak can be grown makes it a fine tree for streets or lawns.



Leaf: Alternate, simple, 6 to 12 inches long, roughly obovate in shape, with many lobes. The two middle sinuses nearly reach the midrib dividing leaf nearly in half. The lobes near the tip resemble a crown, green above and paler, fuzzy below.

Flower: Monoecious; male flowers are yellow-green, borne in long, drooping slender catkins, 2 to 4 inches long; female flowers are green tinged in red and appear as single, short spikes, both appear shortly after the leaves.

Fruit: Acorns are quite large (1 1/2 inches long) and 1/2 enclosed in a warty cap that has a long-fringed margin, maturing in one growing season in late summer and fall.

Twig: Quite stout, yellow-brown, often with corky ridges; multiple terminal buds are small, round, and may be somewhat pubescent often surrounded by thread-like stipules; laterals are similar, but smaller.

Bark: Ashy gray to brown in color and quite scaly, but noticeably ridged vertically on large trees.

Form: A large tree that often reaches over 100 feet tall with a long clear bole. In the open it becomes a very wide, spreading tree.

Site requirements:

It grows slowly on dry uplands and sandy plains but is also found on fertile limestone soils and moist bottomlands in mixture with other hardwoods. Because of its tolerance to a wide range of soil and moisture conditions, bur oak is associated with many other trees. Bur Oak makes an outstanding ornamental tree. It is one of the most tolerant of urban conditions of the white oaks. Bur Oak typically grows in the open, away from forest canopy.

Native Range: Zone 3-8

AL, AR, CT, DC, IA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, OK, PA, SD, TN, TX, VA, VT, WI, WV, WY