



*Quercus alba*  
**White Oak, Stave Oak**

Fagaceae (Beech Family)

Blooming season: May

Plant: Branched perennial, 18-24 meters, 60-80 feet high, trunk diameter of 0.6-1.2 meters, 2-4 feet; forming a short, thick trunk with stout, horizontal far-reaching limbs, more or less gnarled and twisted in old age, and a broad open crown.

Leaves: Alternate, simple, 13-23 cm, 5-9 inches long, about one-half as broad; obovate to oblong; lobed, some with broad lobes and shallow sinuses, others with narrow lobes and deep narrow sinuses, the lobes usually entire; thin and firm glabrous, bright green above, pale or glaucous beneath, often persistent on the tree through the winter.



Bark: The bark is whitish or light gray in color, and lighter in appearance than red or black oak tree bark. This is easiest to see when the bark is wet.

Flower: May, with the leaves, monoecious; the staminate in hairy catkins, 5-8 cm, 2-3 inches long, the pistillate sessile or short-peduncled, reddish, tomentose; calyx campanulate, 6-8 lobed, yellow, hairy; stamens 6-8, with yellow anthers; stigmas red.



Fruit: Sessile or short-stalked acorns; cup with small, brown-tomentose scales, enclosing one-fourth of the nut; nut oblong-ovoid, rounded at the apex, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long, light brown; kernel sweet and edible.

Geographic range: Maine to Minnesota southward to Florida and Texas; rare in the upper peninsula of Michigan, common in the lower peninsula of Michigan.

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Habitat: Grows well in all but very wet soils, in all open exposures. Although found on many soil types, white oak does best on coarse, deep, moist, well-drained, with medium fertility, and slightly acid soils.

Common local companions: Maple trees, red and black oak trees, white pine

Usages:

Human: Ship-building, cooperage, furniture, interior finish, agricultural implements, railroad ties, fuel, etc.

Animal: The acorns are eaten by deer, squirrels, chipmunks, raccoons, black bears, and some birds. Birds nest in the branches, and squirrels will hollow out rotten areas to make places to live.

Why is it called *that*?

Quercus is the oak family of trees, and alba means “white” in latin, and white oak bark is whitish or light gray.

Prepared by: Hope Buell October 2010

Works Cited

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\* Used as a main source of information.