

Oaks

The beech family [Fagaceae] - oaks, beeches and southern beeches of the temperate zones - forms part of our collections. This family also has members in the tropics. The current global distribution of Fagaceae shows the early linkages of the Gondwana land masses.

Deciduous or evergreen, oaks can, through their growth, be an indicator of the depth and richness of a soil. People familiar with the common oak in northern Europe are amazed by the rapid growth of the same species in Australia. Longer growing seasons with higher temperatures are the main reasons for this difference.

Oaks make excellent, although often large, specimen trees. Many Tasmanian parks and properties have at least one species of oak, often the common or English oak [Quercus robur].

Oaks have also been used in construction, for the production of cork, in building ships' hulls and for furniture. It was the shortage of oak in England to supply shipbuilders that led to the development of silviculture, the growing of trees for timber to supply a particular need.

Examples of oak species can be seen in all our northern hemisphere collections, while there are more mature specimens in Westbury Village Green, Launceston City Park and the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens in Hobart.

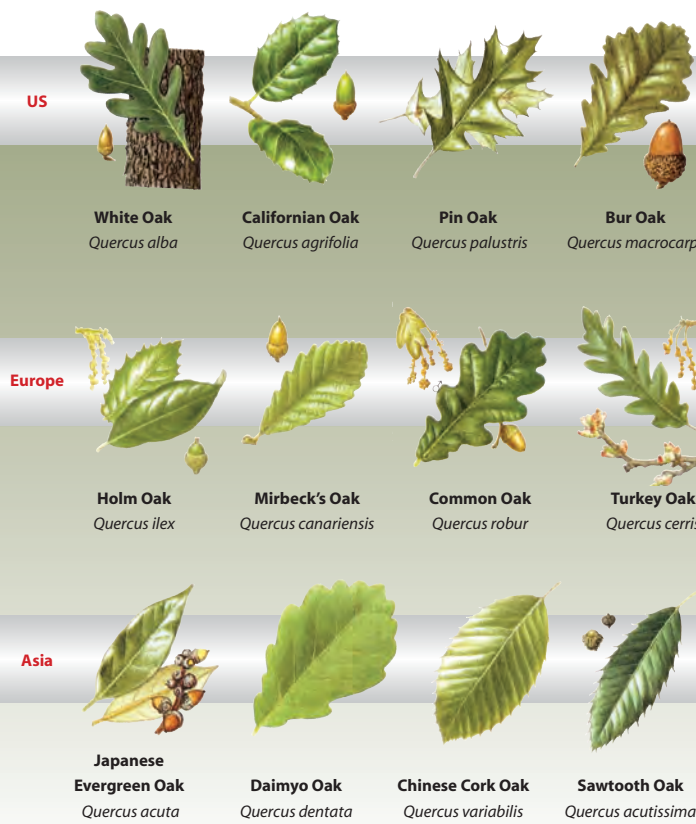


Oak [Quercus, Cyclobalanopsis and Lithocarpus]



The map shows the distribution of oaks. Their spread across the Northern hemisphere evidences continental drift of the northern land mass plates. Some related genera extend into the tropics.

The leaves shown below are samples of oaks from the US, Europe and Asia and show the similarity between the leaves and fruits.



One of the important identifiers for oaks is the acorn.

Bark of an English Oak

