

Live Oak

Quercus virginiana



GENERAL DESCRIPTION: A spectacular tree found primarily in the southeastern United States. While only growing to 60 feet in height its spread can be twice as much with thick branches that bend close to the ground. In the south it is an broadleaf evergreen tree, hence the name "live oak" and in colder climates it is deciduous. In cities such as Savannah Georgia the streets are lined with mature live oaks draped in spanish moss. It makes a handsome shade tree. The bark is dark brown and deeply furrowed to ridges like alligator skin.

HABIT AND SIZE: 40-50' high and 60-100' wide. A wide-spreading evergreen tree with massive horizontal limbs and arching branches that result in a spreading dense rounded crown. The lower horizontal branches bend close to the ground.

LANDSCAPE VALUE: A majestic tree for large spaces such as mansions, golf courses, parks and broad streets. Its evergreen characteristic is particularly useful. It is adaptable to a variety of soil conditions and is relatively tolerant of pollution and salt spray.

LEAVES: Alternately arranged, simple and evergreen with the new leaves emerging simultaneously in the spring replacing the old leaves and exhibiting an olive green color which changes to a leathery dark green on top and a gray green underneath. The leaves are 1.25-3" long and 0.375-1" wide. with an elliptical-obvate shape and entire or spiny and hairy beneath. **FLOWERS:** Typical to the genus with the staminate flowers in catkins and the pistillate flowers 1-5 developing in the axils of the leaves.

FRUIT: Acorns 1-5 in a group, 0.675-1" long, dark brown, ovoid-oblong and enclosed by a peduncled deep cup to 0.33 of the nutlet which is sweet to taste. The fruit matures in a single season.

BUD: 0.625 " long, overlapping, slightly domed, reddish brown in color and hairy or glabrous.

DISEASES AND INSECTS: Insect galls make unsightly leaves but are no real threat. Some root rot in wet habitats.

HARDINESS AND RANGE: Zones 7-9 although specimens are planted in New York City which is zone 5-6. Natural range SE Virginia to S Florida west to Texas and SW Oklahoma.

CULTIVARS: *fusiformis* is a shrubby variety that occupies sandstone ridges in central Texas and the variety *maritima* is a variable coastal form from Virginia around to Louisiana.