

Appendix Z: Common Oaks of the Chicago Region

White oak (*Quercus alba*)—Prior to Euro-American settlement, one of the most abundant species in the region, but its numbers have been reduced at a greater rate than other oak species. White oak grows from dry, upland soils to well-drained bottomlands. Requires full sun and does not regenerate well in closed canopy forests. Acorns are preferred by wildlife.

Swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*)—Historically present, but not abundant in the region. Largely restricted to wet soils and was primarily found along wetlands.

Shingle oak (*Quercus imbricaria*)—Distribution is largely to the south, but is occasionally found along streams and prairie borders. The leaves are not lobed and are broadest near the middle with a slightly wavy margin. Holds onto its leaves through the winter, which offers superior protection for wildlife. Frequently used in urban areas.

Bur oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*)—Among the most fire tolerant of the oaks, very shade intolerant, and is consequently often associated with savannas. Extremely tolerant of drought and is found as far south as southern Texas. Bur oak is a large, broad tree and is long-lived. Produces ample acorns and provides important food and habitat for wildlife.

Chinquapin oak (*Quercus muehlenbergii*)—Grows in shallow, calcareous soils. Chicago is at the northern edge of the species range, and it is not abundant in the region's natural areas. Features simple, oblong leaves that are coarsely toothed. Well-suited for urban areas due to tolerance of poor, compacted soils. Acorns are preferred by wildlife.

Pin oak (*Quercus palustris*)—Does best in wet soils and tolerates intermittent flooding. Occurs in bottomlands and bordering wetlands. Has an attractive, oval habit with a straight trunk, making it popular in landscaping. However, does not tolerate droughts.

Red oak (*Quercus rubra*)—One of the most abundant oak species in the Chicago region. More shade tolerant than other oaks, does well on moist soils, and is frequently found in denser woodlands. Red oak has a broad range, and grows from northern Minnesota to Mississippi and throughout eastern North America.

Black oak (*Quercus velutina*)—An upland species that grows on rocky or sandy soils. It is broadly distributed throughout the eastern United States but has a patchy distribution in the Chicago region. It is not one of the most abundant species in the area but is locally dominant.

