

Quercus coccinea (Scarlet Oak) Beech Family (Fagaceae)

Introduction:

Scarlet oak is a member of the red oak group with lobed leaves and is valued for its ornamental attributes as well as its fine wood. It is considered an excellent alternative to the overplanted pin oak because it is beautiful throughout the year and tolerates alkaline soil.

Culture:

Scarlet oak makes an excellent lawn or park tree. It thrives in full sun and well-drained, acidic soil. This tree is less susceptible to chlorosis problems than pin oak.

Potential problems on oaks in general include obscure scale, two-lined chestnut borer, bacterial leaf scorch, oak horn gall and gypsy moth. In addition, as little as 1 inch of fill soil can kill an oak.

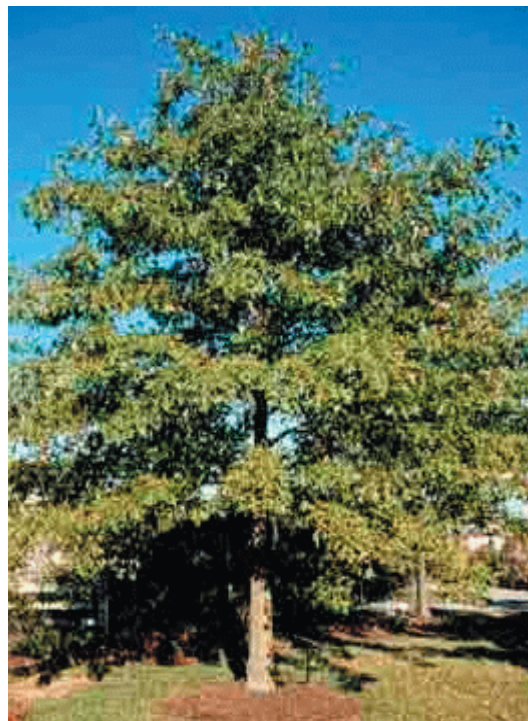
Additional information:

Scarlet oak is appropriately named for its extraordinary leaf color in early spring and in autumn. Its delicate branching pattern combined with nearly black bark and persistent leaves make this an exceptional tree even in winter.

Although scarlet oak has a predominant tap root, it does have some spreading lateral roots, making the tree easier to transplant than some oaks. It is best to transplant the tree in the fall. The lateral roots may appear above the soil surface as they increase in diameter.

The national champion tree is 120 feet tall and is in Powell County, Ky.

Scarlet oak's foliage is similar to pin oak's, but the tree is less tolerant of different environments. This is why scarlet oak is less common in landscapes.



Botanical Characteristics:

Native habit: Maine south to Florida, west to Minnesota and Missouri.

Growth habit: Scarlet oak has a rounded, open form at maturity.

Tree size: This oak can attain a height of 70 to 75 feet and a width of 40 to 50 feet. It can reach a height of 100 feet in the wild.

Flower and fruit: Flowers are not showy. The 1-inch-long acorn is reddish-brown and is enclosed in a deep cap.

Leaf: The leaf has sharply pointed, coarsely toothed lobes. Color ranges from bright red in early spring to dark shiny green in summer then scarlet in fall.

Hardiness: Winter hardy to USDA Zone 4.