



CHINKAPIN OAK

Quercus muehlenbergii

Native Range

Chinkapin oak is native to much of the eastern United States and as far west as central Kansas and southwest Texas. In Kansas, it occurs mainly on limestone soils, rocky riverbanks, and usually on higher ground than bur oak. Occurrence and abundance of chinkapin oak appear to be related to soil reaction and texture. It grows best on medium acid to moderately alkaline, well-drained soils.

Mature Size

It is a moderate-size tree, usually irregular in form, growing to a height of 30 to 60 feet and spread of 20 to 40 feet.

Growth Rate

Growth rate is slow.

Leaves, Stems and Fruit

Leaves are simple and alternately arranged on the twigs. They are elliptic (or widest slightly above the middle), 2 to 4 inches long and 1 ½ to 3 inches wide. The leaf margins have 8 to 14 rounded or pointed, coarse teeth on each side. Twigs are slender and stiff with greenish-brown, orange-brown, or grayish bark. Trunk bark is light gray or ash-color with shallow furrows and short, flaky ridges. Flowers appear in early May. Male and female flowers are on the same tree. Acorns ripen in September. The ½-inch-long fruit is enclosed about one-fourth to one-half by the cap. The fruit is sweet and edible.

Use

Windbreaks

Chinkapin oak is useful as a moderate-size tree in windbreaks. Due to its intolerance to shade, it should be given ample space to grow when planted next to fast-growing trees.

Wildlife Habitat

The sweet acorns are used by a variety of birds and animals.

Timber

Although usually not planted for lumber production, logs in native stands may be sold as white oak.

Adaptation

Statewide.

Soil

Like most trees chinkapin oak grows best on deep, well-drained, fertile soils, but will grow on dry limestone bluffs and hillsides. It does not like poorly drained soils.

Spacing

In-row spacing in a multi-row windbreak or wildlife planting should be about 8 to 15 feet.

Culture

One-year-old, bare-root seedlings 12 to 18 inches tall are used in conservation plantings. They require good weed control for at least 3 years.

Pests

Few known major insect or disease problems exist with this tree.