

*Quercus bicolor*

[Synonyms : *Quercus bicolor* var. *angustifolia*, *Quercus bicolor* var. *cuneiformis*, *Quercus bicolor* var. *platanoides*, *Quercus filiformis*, *Quercus mollis*, *Quercus paludosa*, *Quercus pannosa*, *Quercus platanoides*, *Quercus prinus* var. *discolor*, *Quercus prinus* var. *bicolor*]

**SWAMP WHITE OAK** is a deciduous tree. Native to north-eastern North America, it has sweetish-tasting, shiny brown acorns.

It is also known as Bicolor oak, Blue oak, *Chêne bicolore* (French), *Chêne blanc des marais* (French), *Chêne bleu* (French), Cherry oak, Curly swamp oak, *Hámlókérgû tölgy* (Hungarian), *Kahevärviline tamm* (Estonian), *Kétszinû tölgy* (Hungarian), *Sumpf-Weiss Eiche* (German), Swamp oak, *Tweekleurige eik* (Dutch), White oak, and *Zweifarbige Eiche* (German)

This tree attracts insects which produce galls. The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

The wood is often referred to commercially as White oak.

*Bicolor* is derived from Latin *bi-* (two) and *-color* (colour) components with reference to the two surfaces of the leaves.

Galls on this oak (like those on many others) not only provided Indian tribes with a source of tannin but also a dye.

Apparently some North American Indian tribes used the galls from this oak for treating tuberculosis and cholera, as well as for healing broken bones.

The North American Iroquois Indians harvested the sweet-tasting shiny brown acorns for food. Although they were eaten raw, they were also processed by steeping them (for days or weeks) in running water to remove tannins and any bitterness found in some – after which they are dried and ground for use as flour both for making bread and for thickening stews and soups.

The bark was an ingredient in a solution used by the Chippewa Indians to clean rust off traps. For the Iroquois tribe the tree was also a source of medicine. They used it to treat cholera, tuberculosis and catarh.

Roasted and ground acorns have also provided a coffee substitute.

The tree is cultivated as both an ornamental and a shade tree in parks, golf courses and streets, as well as on golf courses and large lawns.

Today this close-grained, heavy, strong, durable, light brown wood is used for veneering, boarding, beams, general construction, boatbuilding and building interiors, and for making flooring, furniture, railway sleepers, fencing, boxes, barrels and crates. It has also been burnt as fuel.

Birds and animals enjoy the acorns, particularly turkey, mallards, wood ducks and woodpeckers, as well as black bears, white-tailed deer, beavers, squirrels, mice and other smallish rodents. The tree also offers cover for various forms of wildlife.

Medicinally, galls were once used for the treatment of diarrhoea, dysentery and haemorrhaging.