

Quercus emoryi

[Synonyms : *Quercus balsequillana*, *Quercus duraznillo*, *Quercus hastata*]

EMORY OAK is a deciduous or evergreen shrub or tree. Native to Mexico and south-western United States, it has glossy dark yellowish-green leaves and dark reddish-brown to black acorns.

It is also known as Apache oak, Bellota (English, Mexican), Blackjack oak, Black oak, *Chêne d'Emory* (French), Desert live oak, Emory's oak, *Encino prieto* (Mexican), Holly oak, Live oak, Roble negro, and Western black oak.

This tree tolerates drought and strong wind. The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Emoryi celebrates the name of a well-connected, highly respected American army officer, civil engineer, surveyor and cartographer, Major William Hemsley Emory (1811-1887). He conducted many boundary surveys including the Northeastern survey of the border between the United States and Canada (1844-1848) and the Mexican Boundary Survey (1848-1853). This species (*Quercus emoryi*) is believed to have been discovered by him during one of his several expeditions to the American south-west.

Records suggest that emory tree was primarily a source of food for North American Indian tribes in its native habitat, including some of the Tohono O'Odham and some of the Apache tribe. (If the seeds tasted at all bitter they were processed before they were cooked by being steeping them in running water.) Apart from adding ground acorns to stews as a thickening agent Yavapai Indians also stored them for future use. Some of the Tohono O'Odham chewed the acorns like sweets and for some tribes when roasted these acorns offered a coffee substitute.

In the local markets in the states of Arizona and New Mexico the edible more sweet-tasting acorns can still be found for sale today.

Although the close-grained, brittle wood has been used occasionally for making furniture it has long been viewed primarily as a source of fuel (especially in Arizona).

The oblong acorns are eaten by livestock and wildlife, particularly cattle, deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, quail and pigeons while the foliage can be enjoyed by deer and livestock. Tent caterpillars (*Lasiocampidae* genus) also view emory tree as a food plant.