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Quercus grisea

[Synonyms : *Quercus undulata* var. *grisea*]

ARIZONA GRAY OAK is a nearly evergreen shrub or tree. Native to south-western United States to northern Mexico, it has downy, stiff dull greyish-green leaves and light brown acorns.

It is also known as Arizona oak, *Encino blanca* (Mexican), *Encino prieta* (Mexican), Gray oak, Grey oak, Mexican blue oak, Mountain white oak, Scrub oak, and Shin oak.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Grisea means 'pearl-grey' with reference to the foliage, a colour also reflected in some of the common names of this species.

Authorities noted that some of the North American Navajo Indian tribe ate the oval acorns (not least as famine food) and that some of the Apache Indians not only mixed roasted acorns with dried meat stored for Winter food but also flavoured their drinks with bits of the root.

For some of the Navajo Indian tribe Arizona gray oak had mystical powers as it could protect their earth-covered new or ceremonial log huts from ghosts, witches and lightning.

Locally Mexicans have burnt the heavy wood as fuel.

Today the hard wood, if the tree is large enough, is used occasionally for furniture but it recommends itself primarily as a source of fuel or material for fence posts.

Wildlife, not least elk, deer and some domestic animals browse the foliage (although least often cattle or sheep which find it unpalatable). Porcupines, squirrels and other rodents enjoy the acorns, as do many birds, including parrots, turkeys and pigeons.