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Quercus incana

[Synonyms : *Quercus brevifolia*, *Quercus cinerea*, *Quercus phellos* var. *brevifolia*, *Quercus verrucosa*]

BLUEJACK OAK is a deciduous to semi-evergreen shrub or tree. Native to south-eastern United States, it has glossy bluish-green leaves and slightly flattened, brown acorns. It is also known as Cinnamon oak, Grey oak, High-ground willow oak, Sandjack oak, Scrub oak, Shin oak, Turkey oak, and Upland willow oak.

Warning – cattle can be poisoned from eating the young leaves or consuming the foliage to excess.

The flowers are pollinated by the wind.

Incana is Latin (hoary or greyish-white) with reference to the lower surface of the leaves. The common name Bluejack oak refers to the colour of the leaves and to a name for a drinking vessel, often made of wood, a 'jack'.

Bluejack oak is one of the species on which the much respected American botanist, John Bartram (1699-1777) is considered to be an authority.

The hard strong wood has been used locally for making furniture and agricultural implements (including axes and tool handles). It has also been used for general construction..

Today authorities explain that this oak is of little commercial value because of its limited size – although its reddish-brown wood, which can split easily, can be cut for making fence posts or for burning as fuel.

In south-eastern North America the egg-shaped, acorns are said to be especially enjoyed by deer, racoons, squirrels and rodents generally – which are also said to take advantage of the cover provided by the dense thickets which this oak can form. The acorns are also enjoyed by wild turkeys and quail.

Medicinally, in the Himalayas and northern India the acorns have been used to treat some venereal disease, diarrhoea, asthma and indigestion.