

*Quercus muhlenbergii*

[Synonyms : *Quercus acuminata*, *Quercus acutissima*, *Quercus alexanderi*, *Quercus brayi*, *Quercus castanea*, *Quercus muhlenbergii* f. *alexanderi*, *Quercus muhlenbergii* var. *brayi*, *Quercus prinoides*, *Quercus prinoides* var. *acuminata*, *Quercus prinoides* var. *alexanderi*, *Quercus prinus* var. *acuminata*, *Quercus rubra* var. *muhlenbergii*]

**CHINKAPIN OAK** is a deciduous shrub or tree. Native to southern Canada and eastern United States, it has dark or yellowish-green leaves and shiny brown to nearly black acorns.

It is also known as *Chêne-châtaignier jaune* (French), Chestnut oak, Chinquapin oak, *Dub muehlenbergův* (Czech), Dwarf chestnut oak, Dwarf chinkapin, *Mühlenbergi tamm* (Estonian), Pin oak, Rock chestnut oak, Rock oak, Running white oak, Scrub oak, Shrub oak, White oak, Yellow chestnut oak, and Yellow oak.

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

The hard, durable wood is marketed as ‘white oak’.

In the state of Massachusetts in the United States chinkapin oak has been declared a species of special concern.

This oak can be confused with the dwarf chinkapin oak, *Quercus prinoides* and with chestnut oak, *Quercus prinus*. Chinkapin oak is larger than dwarf chinkapin oak and also has sharply pointed buds, while its scaly grey bark sets it apart from chestnut oak.

*Muhlenbergii* honours a respected amateur botanist, Gotthilf Henry Ernst Muhlenberg (1753-1815) of German Lutheran stock. His father was a pastor and the family settled in Pennsylvania, USA in 1742. The common name Chinkapin oak refers to the similarity between the leaves of this tree and those of the chestnut called Chinquapin (*Castanea pumila*).

Apparently some local North American Indian tribes ate the sweetish-tasting acorns. Although they could be eaten raw they were generally boiled, roasted or made into a meal that was used for preparing porridges and bread.

Some of the Delaware North American Indian tribe took a bark infusion to ease vomiting.

The galls together with bark and acorns have not only been used for tanning but have also been a source of ink and a black material dye.

The strong, close-grained wood has been used for flooring and cooperage, as well as for making furniture, agricultural implements, railway sleepers, and fence posts. It has also been burnt as fuel.

This oak was introduced to Britain in 1822.

According to some authorities chinkapin oak has been cultivated in parks and estates occasionally as an ornamental, as well as a street and shade tree.

Deer, chipmunks, squirrels, voles, mice and wild turkeys, as well as other large birds such as woodpeckers, jays, grouse, pheasant and some waterfowl, all eat the sweetish-tasting acorns. (It has been observed that small birds cannot cope with this acorn’s size.) Early settlers fed their pigs on them. Deer and rabbits also browse on the foliage, while porcupines and beavers feed on the rough, thin, grey bark.

Medicinally, the galls have been used in the past for treating diarrhoea, dysentery and haemorrhaging.

