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Quercus nigra

[Synonyms : *Quercus aquatica*, *Quercus microcarya*, *Quercus nana*, *Quercus nigra* var. *heterophylla*, *Quercus uliginosa*]

POSSUM OAK is a deciduous or semi-evergreen tree (according to climate). Native to south-eastern North America it has small pointed acorns with shallow and thin, saucer-shaped cups.

It is also known as American red oak, Barren oak, Black-jack, Black-jak oak, Black oak Black quercus, *Dub černý* (Czech), Duck oak, Pin oak, Post oak, Punk oak, Red oak, Spanish oak, Spotted oak, Turkey oak, and Water oak.

Nigra means 'black'.

Local North American Indian tribes were familiar with the possum oak. Many of them ate the acorns including the Choctaw tribe, and Kiowa Indians apart from eating the acorns also used them to make a beverage. The Kiowas burnt the wood both during religious ceremonies relating to the god, Peyote and as a general fuel too. They also used the leaves as cigarette sleeves.

Apart from fuel, this heavy, hard wood has been used to make charcoal.

The acorns form a significant part of the Autumn diet of such animals and birds as deer, raccoons, ducks, turkeys and quail.