

Quercus phellos

[Synonyms : *Quercus phellos* var. *humilis*, *Quercus phellos* var. *sylvatica*, *Quercus phellos* var. *viridis*]

WILLOW OAK is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern United States, it has glossy yellowish-green leaves and dark banded, pale yellowish-brown acorns.

It is also known as Black oak, *Chêne à feuilles de saule* (French), *Dub čárkolistý* (Czech), *Fuzlevelu tölgy* (Hungarian), Laurel oak, *Pajulehine tamm* (Estonian), Peach oak, *Pile-eg* (Danish), Pin oak, Red oak, Swamp chestnut oak, Swamp oak, Swamp willow oak, Water oak, *Weiden-Eiche* (German), *Wilgbladige eik* (Dutch), Willow-leaved oak, and Willow swamp oak

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

Willow oak is one of three oak trees which has neither lobed nor toothed leaves (the others being the laurel oaks, *Quercus imbricaria* and *Quercus laurifolia*) with which it is sometimes confused – but its leaves can be longer than those of the other two.

Phellos is said to be a Greek word *phellos* (cork) meaning ‘corky’.

Records indicate that the tree provided food for the North American Seminole Indian tribe.

They also used it to make a washing liquid. Primarily however it would seem that willow oak was valued most as a source of medicine. Seminole Indians used a bark or wood decoction externally to treat pain and piles.

Occasionally the strong heavy, red tinged, pale brown wood has been used for construction. It has also been chosen for shingling and clapboards and made into wheel rims. Primarily however it has been valued as a source of charcoal. and fuel. and today is also an important source of pulp.

In Washington DC and the American South (Louisiana, Florida) it is a familiar sight planted as a street tree. or in parks for its shade and ornamental qualities.

Willow oak is believed to have been introduced to Britain in 1723 by the noted English naturalist, Mark Catesby (c.1679-1749).

The acorns are enjoyed by much wildlife, including deer, foxes, opossums, raccoons, squirrels, voles, and mice, as well as turkeys, jays, nuthatches, titmouses, crows, woodpeckers, jackdaws, quails, wrens and ducks. While saplings are susceptible to the attentions of deer, beaver and rabbits.