

Red Oak

(*Quercus rubra*)

Red Oak, also known as Northern or Common Red Oak, can be found in most of the eastern half of the US, except for the deep south. It is a large tree, reaching heights of over 100 feet. Red Oak occurs naturally in the wild, and also is a popular ornamental due to its symmetrical shape and brilliant fall colors. It is also one of the fastest growing of all Oaks, adding two feet a year in early years of growth. Most Red Oaks reproduce via runners that sprout out from stumps of cut trees.

Red Oak, being in the more northern areas of the east, tends to flower in May just as new leaves begin to appear – note the shape and size difference in the two pictures above. The left is a fully developed Red Oak leaf, 5 – 7 inches long, while the right side shows new leafing at the same time as the male flowers, on the hanging catkins, are pollinating. Oak pollen is a major cause of allergic rhinitis, and significant cross-reactivity has been reported between different Oaks.

