

FACT SHEET – American White Oak

Issue 6

Quercus Alba - the White Oak, is one of the finest hardwoods of eastern North America. It is a long-lived oak in the family Fagaceae, native to eastern North America, from southern Quebec west to eastern Minnesota, and south to northern Florida and eastern Texas.



Description

Although called the White Oak, it is very unusual to find an individual specimen with white bark; the usual color is a light grey. In the open it develops into a massive broad-topped tree with great limbs striking out at wide angles. Specimens are known to have lived over 600 years. The oldest tree in North Carolina is a White Oak found at Tanglewood Park.

Growth

Normally not a very tall tree, typically 65–85 feet (19.5-25.5 m) tall at maturity. The tallest known white oak is 144 feet (43 m) tall. It is not unusual for a white oak tree to be as wide as it is tall.

Distribution

The White Oak is fairly tolerant of a variety of habitats, and may be found on ridges, in valleys, and in between, and in dry and moist habitats, and in moderately acid and alkaline soils. It is mainly a lowland tree, but reaches altitudes of 5,249 ft in the Appalachian Mountains.

Uses

Its wood is the best and most valuable of the white oaks and is relatively rot resistant. White Oaks have cellular structures called tyloses. Tyloses give the wood a closed cellular structure, which does not allow water to pass. Tyloses are cell ingrowths of living wood parenchyma into the cavities of xylem conducting cells. The white oaks, with tyloses, are used in making wine and whiskey barrels as well as outdoor furniture. It has been used for construction, shipbuilding, agricultural implements, and interior finish of houses.

Woodworkers should beware that ferrous metal hardware reacts with oak, causing corrosion and staining the wood. Brass or stainless steel fittings should be used instead.

USS Constitution (see photo above) is a wooden-hulled, three-masted heavy frigate of the United States Navy. Named by President George Washington after the Constitution of the United States of America, she is the world's oldest floating commissioned naval vessel and is made from white oak.

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|---------------------------|--|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|
| STOCKS AVAILABLE:- | 1" | 1 ¼" | 1 ½" | 2" | 2 ½" | 3" |
| | Widths | - | 4" & Wider, | 9" & Wider | | |
| | Plus Various Rippled To Width sizes in 1" | | | | | |
| | Lengths | - | 6fts & Longer | | | |