



## ***Quercus macrocarpa* - Bur oak**

COMMON NAME: Bur oak

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Quercus macrocarpa* - From the Latin for "large fruited" oak.

FLOWERS: The fruit-bearing flowers are inconspicuous. Pollen-bearing flowers are borne in yellow-green catkins as the leaves emerge in spring.

BLOOMING PERIOD: Late April to mid-May

SIZE: A very large, rounded tree reaching 80 feet or more in height with an equal or greater spread.

BEHAVIOR: A slow-grower, although young plants grow more quickly if well cared for. Long-lived, an excellent shade tree. Has a very deep taproot, so it is very difficult to move.

SITE REQUIREMENTS: Has a very wide tolerance of soil types, from heavy to very light, and tolerates moisture extremes once it is established. It is somewhat tolerant of pollution and other disturbances, but not tolerant of shade.

NATURAL RANGE: Eastern Canada and central Maine west to southern Manitoba, south to the uplands of North Carolina, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. It is found throughout Wisconsin, but is less common in the northeastern part of the state.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Bur oak has interesting corky, ridged twigs and a deeply furrowed bark. It is an excellent shade tree with strong, wide-spreading branches. This coarse, rugged nature gives it lots of character and its survival of prairie fires is legendary. The acorns are covered by a deep cap with a heavy fringe of coarse bracts which account for the "bur" in the name. The trees do not bear fruit (have acorns) until they are nearly 50 years old, and then only every 2-3 years. Unfortunately for landscape purposes, bur oaks do not have special fall color.

SUGGESTED CARE: Water well during the first growing season and during droughts for the next couple of years. Protect from rabbits when young. For optimal growth mulch well until the young tree is able to shade out competitive grasses.

COMPANION PLANTS: Bur oaks were originally associated with a variety of prairie species in oak "openings" or savannas. Now it is most frequently seen in drier woodlands with white and black oaks, black and choke cherries, white ash, basswood, gray dogwood, hazelnut, shagbark hickory, wild geranium, woodbine, mayapple, sweet cicely, tall Solomon's seal, Solomon's plume and wild grape. Where sunlight allows, it may also be found with prairie remnants such as flowering spurge, northern bedstraw, ox-eye, wild bergamot, and wild rose.