GENERAL DISTRIBUTION :

Chinkapin oak is widely distributed throughout much of eastern and

central North America [11]. Its range extends from New England and

Pennsylvania southward mostly in the mountains through Virginia and the

Carolinas to northwestern Florida, westward to northern Mexico,

south-central Texas, and Oklahoma, and north to Minnesota, Wisconsin,

southern Ontario, and southern Michigan [23,26].

Local and disjunct populations occur in western Texas, New Mexico, and

northeastern Mexico [36,69]. In the eastern United States, chinkapin

oak is relatively rare throughout much of the Atlantic and Gulf coastal

plains [32]. It is uncommon or rare in Pennsylvania [32] and in New

England [58]. Chinkapin oak reaches greatest abundance in the

Mississippi and Ohio valleys [23,32].

The acorns of chinkapin oak are a particularly important food item for

the red-headed woodpecker, red-bellied woodpecker, northern bobwhite,

and blue jay [64]. Other bird species that feed on acorns include the

ruffed grouse, sharp-tailed grouse, ring-necked pheasant, wild turkey,

common crow, northern flicker, grackle, blue jay, brown thrasher, tufted

titmouse, starling, lesser prairie chicken, chickadees, nuthatches, and

waterfowl [38,52,71].

GENERAL BOTANICAL CHARACTERISTICS :

Chinkapin oak is a spreading, medium to large, deciduous tree which

generally reaches 16 to 52 feet (5-16 m) in height [50] but occasionally

grows to 80 or 90 feet (24-27 m) [46,66]. On exceptional sites in the

lower Wabash and Ohio valleys, individuals can reach 160 feet (48 m) in

height and up to 4 feet (1.2 m) in diameter [23]. Chinkapin oak

typically has large, low branches and a rounded crown [66]. In closed

forest stands it develops a straight, columnar trunk, a dense rounded

crown, and fairly small branches [23]. In the open, plants usually

develop a short trunk and broad crown. Grayish-brown twigs are rigid

and glabrous [66]. The thin bark is light gray to silvery, and rough or

scaly [50,66]. The alternate, simple leaves are coriaceous and variable

in shape [66].

SITE CHARACTERISTICS :

Chinkapin oak grows on dry, rocky sites [11], such as calcareous bluffs,

rocky hillsides, and protected slopes and canyons [20]. It also occurs

in glades and valleys, and along rocky streambanks [26,27,66]. In parts

of the Midwest, chinkapin oak grows in rich forests and on stablized

dunes [70]. Chinkapin oak is particularly common near forest margins

[27]. It is fairly tolerant of shade and drought [5,19].