



# Black Oak

## *Quercus velutina* Linnaeus

Black oak is one of the predominant eastern North America forest oaks. It is a member of the red oak subgenus, *Lobatae* (formerly *Erythrobalanus*). Black oak is sometimes known as “quercitron.” It has a distinctive orange to yellow inner bark, and a dark, scaly outer bark. The wood is of moderately good quality, and is marketed as red oak. Leaves always have some scurfy pubescence underneath. Sometimes this is only where the veins join, or the entire back of the leaf may be scurfy. The leaves are highly variable, with leaves of young trees usually being scarcely lobed, and leaves of older trees deeply lobed. Leaves on vigorous shoots of saplings are sometimes a foot long. The black oak is moderately drought-tolerant and fairly tolerant of soils and soil pH. It usually lives 200 to 250 years. It can reach a trunk diameter of seven feet in very old specimens.

### Cultivation

Normal winter stratification of the acorns is all that is necessary. This can easily be accomplished by planting the seed in fall or early winter, preferably under two or more inches of humus. Alternatively, this can be accomplished by embedding the acorns in a planting mix and storing in the freezer for ten days, then the refrigerator for another sixty days. This seed can be stored in refrigeration for a year, but this is not recommended, and viability will be much lower.

### Note

Many acorns are subject to one or another species of acorn weevil, mostly in genus *Curculio*. These have legless grubs that resemble maggots. They grow in the acorn from early formation, and then bore a hole to exit after the acorn has dropped from the tree. We try to screen for these and pull infested acorns, but we cannot catch them all. If you find one of these grubs, they are harmless. Simply destroy it and dispose of it. The acorn is probably still viable.

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