Overcup Oak
*Quercus lyrata*

Introduction

Overcup Oak grows slowly, sometimes to more than 100 feet in height in its native habitat but is more often seen 30 to 40 feet high and wide, forming a rounded silhouette with an open crown, large-diameter branches, and a twisted trunk. The dark green, leathery, lobed leaves have fuzzy, white undersides and turn a rich brown color before dropping in fall. The nuts or acorns which are produced are quite popular with squirrels, turkeys, wild hogs and deer. The rough, reddish or gray/brown bark is attractive and is worthy of display with night-time lighting.

General Information

Scientific name: *Quercus lyrata*

Pronunciation: KWERK-us lye-RAY-tuh

Common name(s): Overcup Oak

Family: Fagaceae

USDA hardiness zones: 6A through 9A

Origin: native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: reclamation; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); street without sidewalk; shade; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median

Availability: not native to North America

Description

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical
Crown shape: oval, round

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: moderate

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: entire, lobed

Leaf shape: oblong, obovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: copper

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: brown

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels/mammals; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem
Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: gray, brown

Current year twig thickness: thick

Wood specific gravity: 0.63

Culture

Light requirement: partial sun or partial shade, full sun Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

This oak should be grown with a single trunk and a few widely-spaced branches to mimic its growth habit in the wild. The first permanent branch can be located three to five feet from the ground if the tree will be planted in an open lawn area and allowed to develop a wide crown. For those planted as street trees or in areas requiring clearance for vehicles or pedestrians, the first permanent branch should be higher on the trunk. The interior portion of the crown often cleans itself of small branches, displaying the nice branch arrangement common on most specimens.

Overcup Oak should be grown in full sun or partial shade on almost any soil, tolerating wet, poorly drained sites or acid, sandy soils. It would be well suited for planting in poorly-drained urban sites, but is not normally available at landscape nurseries.
Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases of major concern.

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