**Quercus acuta**
**Japanese Evergreen Oak**¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

**INTRODUCTION**

Japanese Evergreen Oak reaches 20 to 30 feet in height with a 15 to 20-foot-spread and has an oval to rounded silhouette with dense, low branching and smooth, grey bark on the often multiple trunks (Fig. 1). The dark green, glossy leaves, 2.5 to 5 inches long, have wavy-margins and a paler underside. New growth is purplish-brown. The inconspicuous flowers are followed by brown, cupped acorns. The dense growth and small size make Japanese Evergreen Oak ideal for use as a specimen, screen, or small shade tree. Unfortunately, it is not available in nurseries.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** Quercus acuta
- **Pronunciation:** KWERK-us ack-YOO-tuh
- **Common name(s):** Japanese Evergreen Oak
- **Family:** Fagaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 9 through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Uses:**
  - large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size);
  - wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide);
  - medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size);
  - medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide);
  - recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; shade tree;
  - narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide);
  - specimen;
  - residential street tree;
- **Availability:** grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 20 to 30 feet
- **Spread:** 15 to 20 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
- **Crown shape:** oval; round
- **Crown density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** medium

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¹ This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-539, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: October 1994.

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Texture: medium

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: entire; undulate
Leaf shape: elliptic (oval); ovate
Leaf venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: broadleaf evergreen; evergreen
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: no fall color change
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower
Flower color: brown
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit
Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown
Fruit characteristics: attracts squirrels and other mammals; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

Trunk and Branches
Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: thick
Figure 3. Foliage of Japanese Evergreen Oak.

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** moderate

**Other**

**Roots:** surface roots are usually not a problem  
**Winter interest:** no special winter interest  
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** not known to be susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** unknown

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

Japanese Evergreen Oak should be grown in full sun or partial shade on well-drained, fertile, acid soil.

**Pests**

The tree has not been extensively tested.

**Diseases**

The tree has not been extensively tested.