**Quercus imbricaria**
Shingle Oak

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

This stately, deciduous, native tree grows 40 to 60 feet tall (occasionally 80 to 100 feet) with an equal or greater spread, its broad, strong branches casting medium to deep shade below the rounded canopy (Fig. 1). The smooth, four to six-inch-long by one to two-inch-wide leaves start out life with a red to yellow cast, deepen to a rich green through the summer, then turn shades of yellow and rust again in the fall before dropping. Some leaves will persist on the tree throughout the winter. In May or early June the flowers appear as drooping yellowish-green catkins and are followed by the production of one-half to one-inch-long, dark brown acorns.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

- **Scientific name:** *Quercus imbricaria*
- **Pronunciation:** KWERK-us im-brih-KAIR-ee-uh
- **Common name(s):** Shingle Oak, Northern Laurel Oak
- **Family:** Fagaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** native to North America
- **Uses:** large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); shade tree; specimen; residential street tree; no proven urban tolerance
- **Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

- **Height:** 40 to 60 feet
- **Spread:** 40 to 60 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
- **Crown shape:** oval; round; pyramidal
- **Crown density:** dense
- **Growth rate:** slow

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-548, 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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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** simple
- **Leaf margin:** sinuate; undulate
- **Leaf shape:** elliptic (oval); lanceolate; oblong
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate; reticulate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- **Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** red; yellow
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

**Flower**

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

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** oval; round
- **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; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
- **Breakage:** resistant
- **Current year twig color:** brown; green
- **Current year twig thickness:** thin
USE AND MANAGEMENT

The wood of Shingle Oak is extremely durable and was used in pioneer days for split shingles. This strong, resilient nature of Shingle Oak and its pyramidal shape when young help to make it suited to use as a screen, or a durable street or specimen tree which is unlikely to be damaged by harsh winds or snow-loads. It can be planted along residential streets, but there are more adaptable trees for downtown areas.

Naturally found along streams or river banks, Shingle Oak should be grown in full sun and prefers moist but well-drained, acid soils though it will adapt to moderately drier conditions and slightly alkaline soil. It is tolerant of wet sites once established. Field-grown trees should be transplanted in springtime for best survival.

Propagation is by seed.

Pests

Some pests of this oak are borer, variable Oak and Oak slug caterpillar although natural enemies usually provide control.

Diseases

Twig gall leaf miner and powdery mildew are common diseases for this tree. Shingle Oak is also susceptible to oak wilt.

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; extended flooding; well-drained
Drought tolerance: high
Aerosol salt tolerance: high

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers
Outstanding tree: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more
Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time
Ozone sensitivity: tolerant
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible
Pest resistance: long-term health usually not affected by pests