

Live Oak (*Quercus virginiana*)

Alex X. Niemiera, Associate Professor, Department of Horticulture

Summary:

Foliage: Evergreen broadleaf

Height: 40 feet

Spread: 60 feet

Shape: Spreading

A massive and majestic shade tree with evergreen foliage that is bright olive-green when new and changes to a glossy, dark green when mature.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 7b to 10

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Moisture: Wet to moist to average

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include shade, street tree, and specimen plant.

Planting Notes:

Transplant small size trees.

Tolerates soils ranging from light sand to heavy and compact silt and clay.

Tolerates a wide range of moisture conditions.

Tolerates salt spray.

Requires large area for branches and roots to spread.

Care:

Prune when young to establish main branches.

Problems:

No serious pest or disease problems.

Gall insect is more unsightly than damaging.

Susceptible to root rot in coastal areas.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Quercus virginiana*: no important cultivars.

Comments:

An evergreen member of the oak family, the live oak is cold hardy in the Tidewater area and as far north as Williamsburg.

A magnificent shade tree; however, its large, wide-spreading, horizontal branches make it inappropriate for small properties.

The acorns of the live oak are eaten by many animals.

This material was originally developed by Carol Ness as part of the Interactive Design and Development Project funded by the Kellogg Foundation.