

White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

The White Oak can grow to 80 feet tall with an equal spread if space is available. It has a short stocky trunk with massive horizontal limbs. The wide spreading branches form an upright, broad-rounded crown. The bark is light ashy gray, scaly or shallow furrowed, variable in appearance, often broken into small, narrow, rectangular blocks and scales. The leaves are dark green to slightly blue-green in summer, brown and wine-red to orange-red in the fall. The fall foliage is showy. Oaks are wind pollinated. The White Oak is less susceptible to oak wilt than the Red Oak species.

White Oaks only need one year to make an acorn therefore they contain less tannic acid making them better mast for foraging whitetail deer. The wood from this tree is charred and built into barrels to age and flavor bourbon whiskey. This practice is so common that another common name for White Oak is Stave Oak. Stave is the term used for the boards that are used to build a whiskey barrel. The reason is because not only are the strength and durability important factors, but this choice is also due to microscopic tissues called tyloses that 'plug' the vascular cells of the wood, sealing in the barrel's liquid contents.

The White Oak forever earned its place in history books when it was combined with other oak lumber to build the famous USS Constitution (also known as "Old Ironsides"). And even in World War II, White Oak also served our country as the keels of mine sweepers and patrol boats.