

Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*)

The Pin Oak is a straight-trunked tree with spreading to horizontal branches, very slender pin-like twigs, and a broadly conical crown. It is a strongly pyramidal tree with a distinct central leader, growing 60-70 feet or taller. Instead of the gnarled, massive qualities of most oaks, the Pin Oak has a more graceful, slender appearance. Old trees become high-crowned after shedding lower limbs. Dark-green foliage becomes dark-red in fall. Leaves persist into winter.

The name Pin Oak comes from its short, tough branchlets located along the branches and limbs. Because of its tolerance for wet conditions, the tree is also known regionally as swamp oak, water oak and swamp Spanish oak. The tree was first observed scientifically prior to 1770.

It is among the faster-growing oaks, averaging 12 to 15 feet over a 5- to 7-year period. Pin Oaks can grow to be one of the largest oak trees. It makes an impressive street tree. However, they are susceptible to disease. All too often, mass plantings of pin oaks are being cut down because of disease. Communities should be careful to plant a diversity of street tree species to avoid potential disease problems.

While the Pin Oak is a very popular landscape tree, many urban foresters refrain from using it because of its tendency to lift sidewalks and it doesn't have a very long life span.