

# BLACK OAK

## *Quercus velutina* Lam.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Smooth-bark oak, Yellow oak, Quercitron oak.

FORM: Often 70-80 feet and occasionally 150 feet high, trunk diameter 3-4 feet, with slender branches spreading gradually into a narrow open head.

BARK: 3/4-1 1/2 inches thick on old trunks, deeply divided into broad rounded ridges, broken on the surface into thick dark brown or nearly black, closely appressed plate-like scales.

TWIGS: Stout, pale lenticellate, smooth or sparingly pubescent, dull reddish-brown or nearly black.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, obovate or oblong, rounded, cuneate or truncate at base, mostly 7-lobed sometimes divided nearly to the middle by wide rounded sinuses into narrow obovate more or less repand-dentate lobes or into elongated nearly entire mucronate lobes, usually 5-6 inches long, 3-4 inches wide, dark green, glabrous and lustrous above, pale yellow-green below.

FLOWERS: Monoecious; staminate flowers in interrupted filiform hairy aments 4-6 inches long, borne on the growth of the preceding season or from the axils of the inner scales of the terminal bud; anthers yellow; pistillate flowers in groups of 2-3, occasionally solitary, on short peduncles, borne in the axils of the leaves of the season.

FRUIT: Ripens the second season; nut ovate to oval, reddish-brown, often striate and pubescent, round-pointed at apex, 1/2-3/4 inch long, about half of its length enclosed in the turbinate cup.

WINTER BUDS: Alternate, ovoid, strongly angled, narrowed at base, obtuse at apex, hoary-tomentose, 1/4-1/2 inch long.

WOOD: Hard, heavy, strong, coarse-grained, light reddish-brown with paler sapwood.

USES: Firewood, pulp. Historical uses: tannin, dyes.

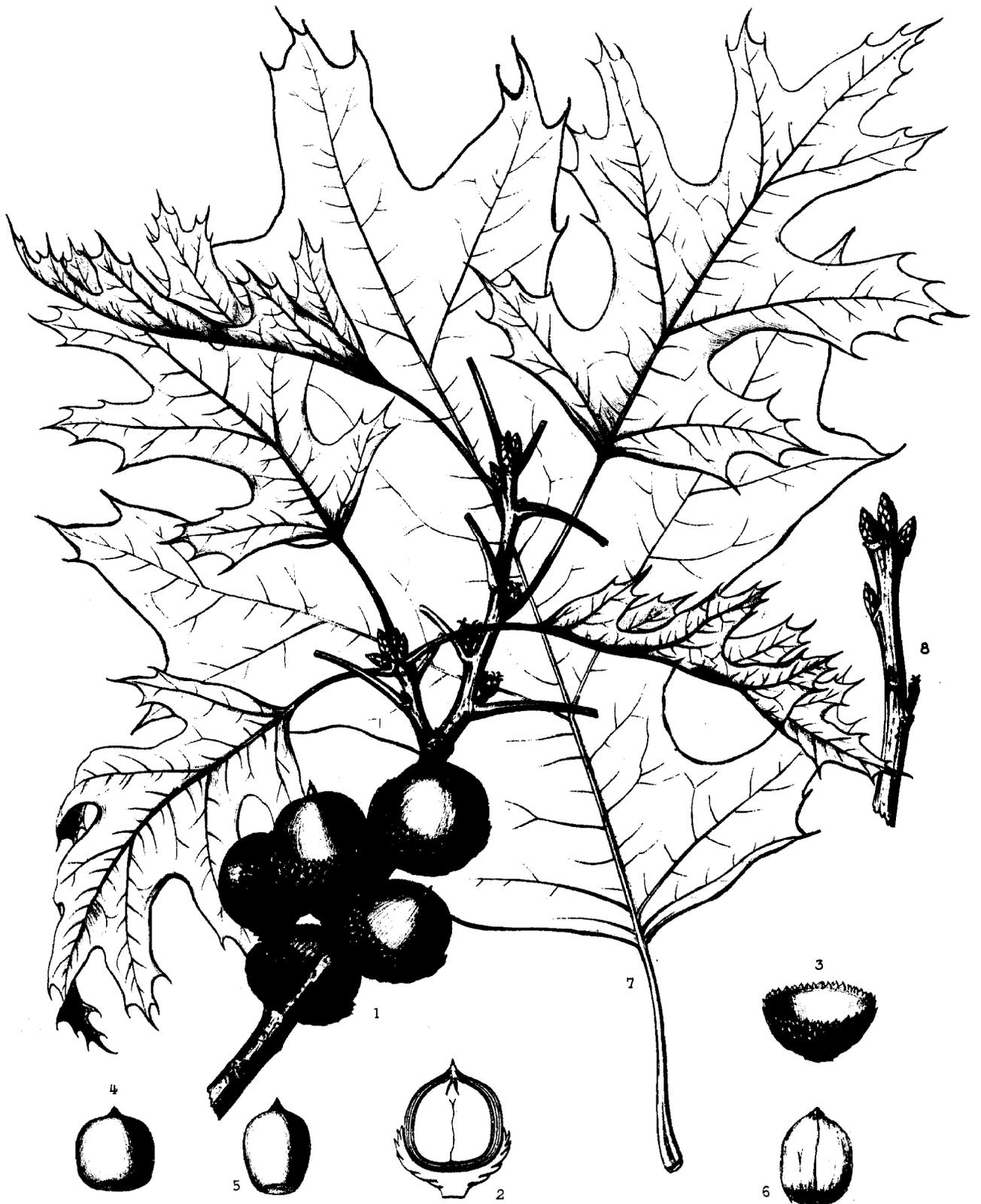
HABITAT: Prefers well-drained sites on ridges and hills, highly tolerant of poor soils.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Its yellow inner bark and bitter taste; many varieties of leaves on the same tree; large angular hoary-tomentose buds; rough outer bark on old trunks; yields quercitron, a yellow dye.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Widely distributed over the state as far south as Monroe County.

### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

- |                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. A fruiting branch           | 5. A nut              |
| 2. Vertical section of a fruit | 6. A seed             |
| 3. A cup                       | 7. A leaf             |
| 4. A nut                       | 8. A winter branchlet |



*Quercus velutina* Lam.