

LAUREL OAK

Quercus laurifolia Michx.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Darlington oak, Laurel-leaved oak, Water oak, Swamp laurel oak.

FORM: Occasionally 100 feet high, diameter of trunk 3-4 feet, slender branches spreading into a broad dense round-topped head.

BARK: On young trees 1/2-1 inch thick, dark brown, more or less tinged with red, with small closely appressed scales; at base of old trees 1-2 inches thick, nearly black, divided by deep fissures into broad flat ridges.

TWIGS: Slender, glabrous, at first dark red, later reddish-brown or dark gray.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, elliptic, acuminate at the ends, apiculate at apex, occasionally lanceolate or oblong-obovate and rounded at apex, sometimes 3-lobed at apex, terminal lobe acuminate, frequently unequally lobed on vigorous branches of young trees, green and lustrous above, paler below, 3-4 inches long, 3/4 inch wide.

FLOWERS: Monoecious; staminate in hoary tomentose aments 2-3 inches long, calyx pubescent, divided into 4 rounded segments; pistillate on stout glabrous peduncles, stigmas dark red.

FRUIT: Generally solitary; nut ovoid to hemispheric, broad and slightly rounded at base, apex rounded, puberulous, dark brown, about 1/2 inch long, about 1/4 enclosed in a thin saucer-shaped cup; acorns ripen the second year.

WINTER BUDS: Broadly ovoid or oval, acute at apex, 1/16-1/8 inch long, with numerous, closely imbricated bright red-brown scales.

WOOD: Heavy, very strong and hard, coarse-grained, dark brown tinged with red, with thick lighter colored sapwood.

USES: Firewood, pulp.

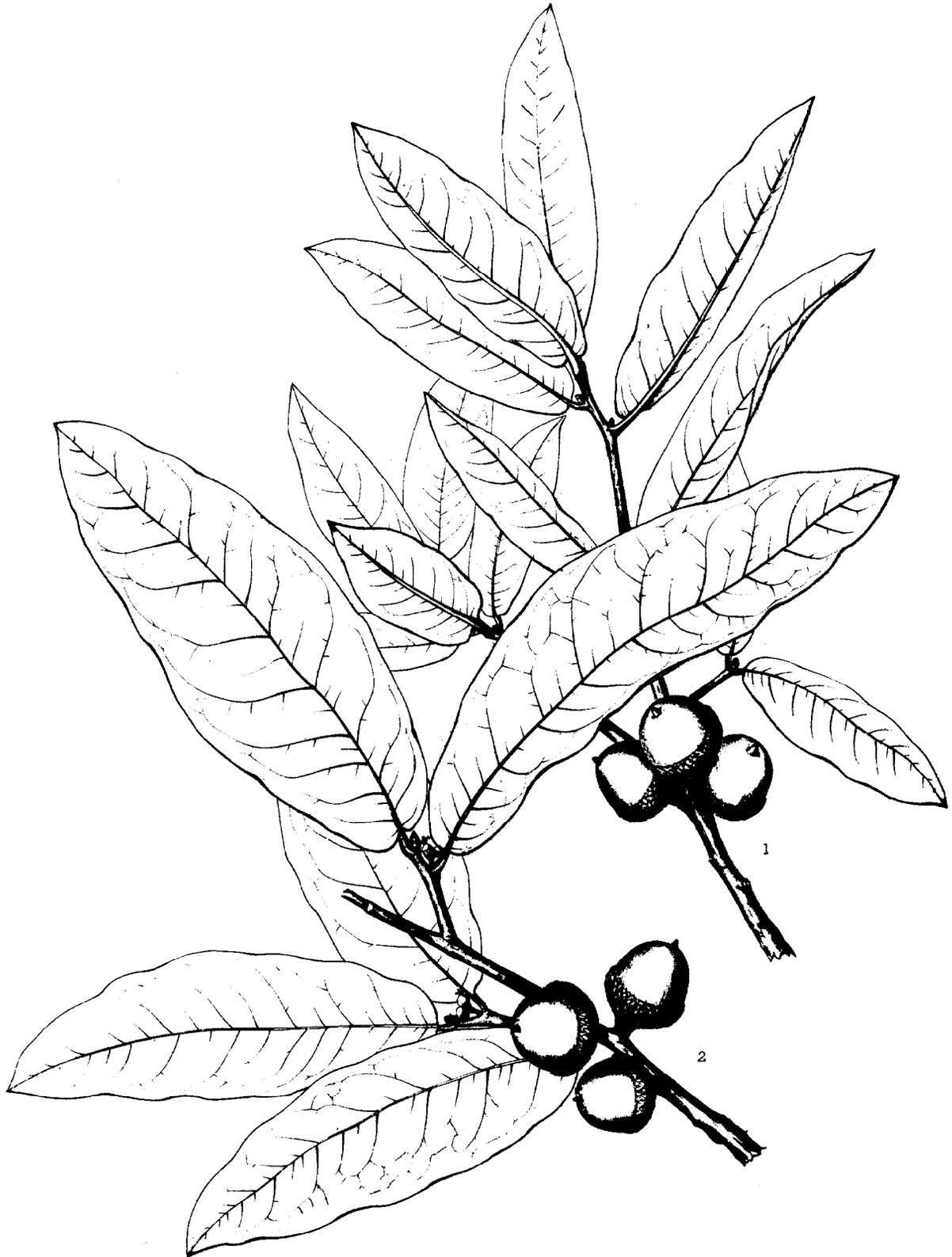
HABITAT: Sandy banks of streams, swamps and rich hummocks.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves elliptic, remain green on the tree until spring; nut dark brown, about 1/2 inch long, about 1/4 of its length enclosed in a thin saucer-shaped cup; crown broad, dense, round-topped.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Occurs in Tuscaloosa, Bibb, Chilton, and Coosa Counties, frequent southeastward from Tuscaloosa County.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

1. A flowering branch
2. A staminate flower
3. A pistillate flower
4. A fruiting branch
5. A leaf of a sterile branch of a young tree
6. A winter branchlet



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