

WATER OAK

Quercus nigra L

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Possum oak, Duck oak, Pin oak.

FORM: Occasionally 80 feet high, trunk 2-3 1/2 feet in diameter, numerous branches spreading gradually from the stem form a symmetrical, round-topped head.

BARK: 1/2-3/4 inch thick, smooth, light brown surface, slightly tinged with red and covered with closely appressed scales.

TWIGS: Light to dull red the first season, grayish-brown their second year.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, oblong-obovate, gradually narrowed and cuneate at base, often enlarged abruptly at the broad rounded entire or occasionally 3-lobed apex; on vigorous young branchlets sometimes pinnatifid, with acute, acuminate or rounded lobes of broadly oblong-obovate and rounded apex or undulate margins; on upper branches occasionally linear-lanceolate, on occasional trees narrowed to an elongated cuneate base and widened above into a more or less deeply 3-lobed apex, the lobes rounded or acute; on upper branches sometimes linear-lanceolate to linear-obovate, acute or rounded at apex, divided above the middle by deep rounded sinuses into elongated, lanceolate, acute, entire lobes or pinnatifid above the middle, at maturity bluish-green above, paler below, usually 2 1/2 inches long, 1 1/2 inches wide, or on fertile branches 6 inches long, 2 inches wide.

FLOWERS: Monoecious; staminate in red hairy stemmed aments 2-3 inches long; pistillate on short tomentose peduncles, stigmas deep red.

FRUIT: Matures second season, usually solitary; nut ovoid, broad and flat at base, full and rounded at the pubescent apex, light yellow-brown, often striate, 1/2-2/3 inch long and nearly as thick, usually enclosed only at the base in a saucer-shaped cup.

WINTER BUDS: Ovoid, acute, strongly angled, scales loosely imbricated, dark red-brown, slightly ciliate on the margins.

WOOD: Heavy, hard, strong, close-grained, light brown with thick, lighter colored sapwood.

USES: Rough lumber, firewood, pulp, landscaping.

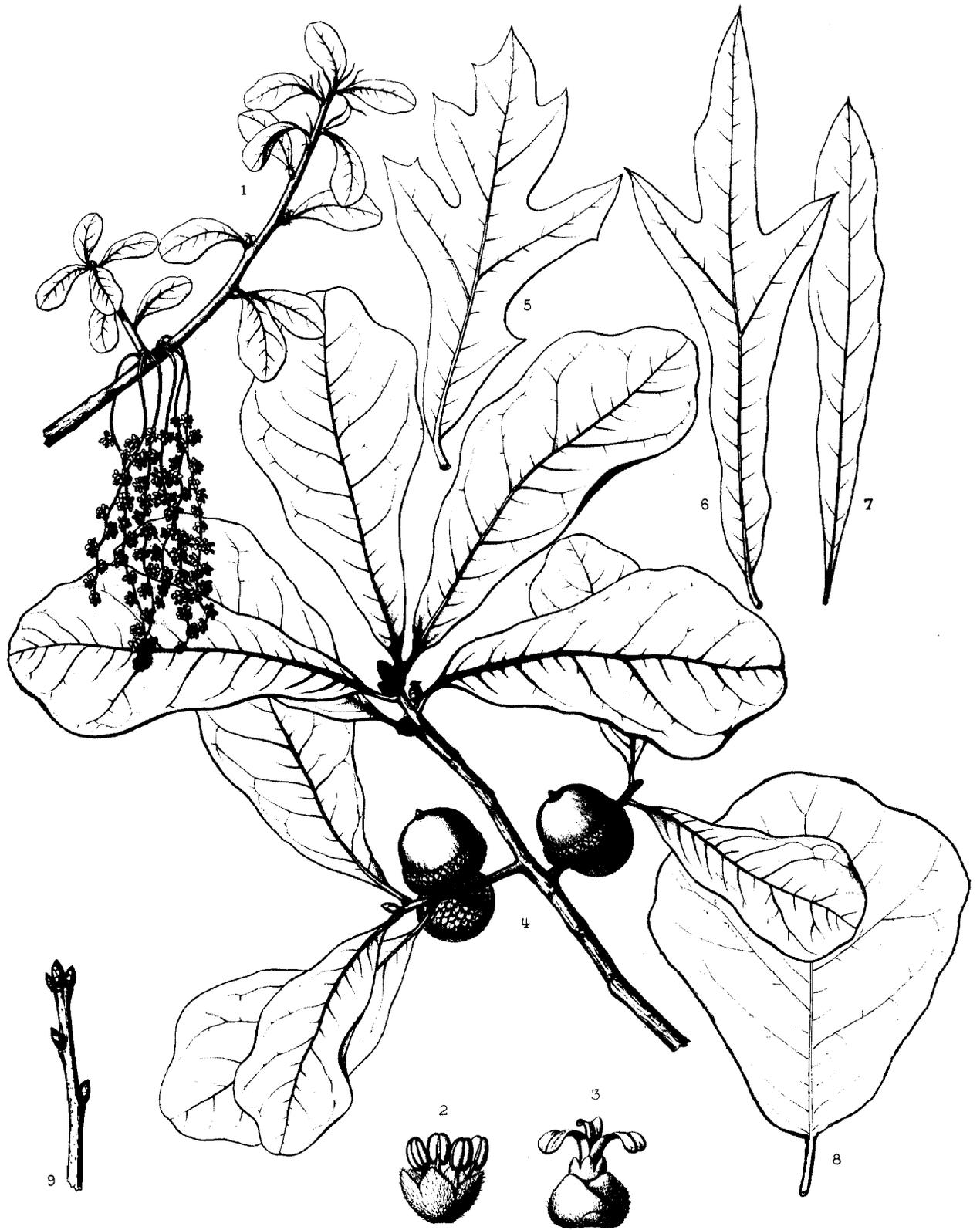
HABITAT: High sandy borders of swamps and streams, rich bottom lands.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves quite variable in form; bark smooth, covered with closely appressed scales. A good shade tree.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Distributed pretty well over the state, seems to be most abundant in the Black Belt.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. A flowering branch | 6. A leaf |
| 2. A staminate flower | 7. A leaf |
| 3. A pistillate flower | 8. A leaf |
| 4. A fruiting branch | 9. A winter branchlet |
| 5. A leaf | |



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