

WILLOW OAK

Quercus phellos L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Peach oak, Pin oak, Swamp willow oak.

FORM: Often 70-90 feet high, 2 feet, rarely 4 feet in diameter with small branches spreading into a comparatively narrow open or conical round-topped head.

BARK: 1/2-3/4 inch thick, light red-brown, slightly tinged with red, generally smooth; on old trees broken by shallow fissures into irregular plates covered by closely appressed scales.

TWIGS: Glabrous, reddish-brown, roughened by dark lenticels, second year dark brown, tinged with red or grayish-brown.

LEAVES: Alternate, simple, ovate-lanceolate, rarely obovate-lanceolate, often somewhat falcate, narrowed and acute at both ends, entire with slightly undulate margins, glabrous, light green, rather lustrous above, dull and paler or rarely hoary pubescent below, 2 1/2-5 inches long, 1/4-1 inch wide.

FLOWERS: Monoecious; staminate in slender-stemmed aments 2-3 inches long, calyx yellow; pistillate flowers on slender glabrous peduncles, stigmas bright red.

FRUIT: Matures the second season; nut hemispheric, light, yellow-brown, coated with pale pubescence, enclosed only at the very base in the thin pale reddish-brown saucer-shaped cup, about 1/2 inch in diameter.

WINTER BUDS: Ovoid, acute, about 1/8 inch long with dark chestnut-brown scales scarious on the margins.

WOOD: Heavy, strong, not hard, rather close-grained, light brown tinged with red, thin lighter colored sapwood

USES: Rough lumber, firewood, pulp, landscaping.

HABITAT: Low wet borders of swamps and streams and rich sandy uplands.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Willow-shaped leaves; flat cups of the acorns; small acorns; can tolerate water better than most oaks.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Fairly well distributed over the state; found mostly in alluvial bottoms and damp clayey woods.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A flowering branch | 4. A fruiting branch |
| 2. A staminate flower | 5. A leaf from a young vigorous shoot |
| 3. A pistillate flower | 6. A winter branchlet |



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