

**Southern Live Oak**

<b>Latin name:</b> <i>Quercus virginiana</i>	<b>Texture:</b> Fine <sup>13</sup>
<b>Common name:</b> Southern Live Oak	<b>Growth rate:</b> Medium <sup>13</sup>
<b>Flowers:</b> Yellow, inconspicuous <sup>17</sup> , catkins 2-3 in. <sup>10</sup> , blooms March-May <sup>10</sup>	<b>Light:</b> Sun, part-shade <sup>10</sup>
<b>Fruit or cones:</b> Brown <sup>17</sup> to dark black, 1 in. acorns produced in clusters of 1-5 <sup>6</sup>	<b>Moisture:</b> Prefers high moisture but tolerates drought <sup>6</sup>
<b>Height &amp; Width:</b> 40-80 ft. tall and 60-100 ft. wide <sup>6</sup>	<b>Soil*:</b> Adapted to coarse, fine, & medium textured soils, tolerates a pH between 4.5 and 7.3 <sup>17</sup>
<b>Type:</b> Deciduous <sup>10</sup>	<b>Zones:</b> 8-10 <sup>4</sup>
<b>Habit:</b> Wide-spreading <sup>6</sup> with a broad, rounded canopy <sup>10</sup>	<b>Origin:</b> Native to Utah, Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia <sup>16</sup>
<b>Wetland indicator category**:</b> Facultative Upland in Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains & Eastern Mountain Piedmont <sup>17</sup>	<b>Ecosystem benefits:</b> Ornamental shade tree, attracts birds, squirrels, and butterflies for shelter and food, timber, medicinally used to treat dysentery (gastrointestinal disease) <sup>10</sup>

(Numbers identify sources listed on page 2-3)

**Features:** The Live Oak is an outstanding specimen in the landscape. They have massive horizontal limbs that give a majestic appearance<sup>6</sup>. Matured trees are some of the most recognized native trees in South Carolina, often decorated with Spanish moss and resurrection ferns<sup>6</sup>. Live oaks have successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common, and are highly salt tolerant<sup>13</sup>.

**Siting:** This species forms large root systems and large crowns with age<sup>16</sup>, so they need adequate space considering mature height and spread. They are commonly found planted along avenues or drives. In urban areas, matured tree roots can lift sidewalks or streets if planted too close<sup>6</sup>. A great plant for a residential shade tree<sup>10</sup>. Considering mature size, useful in large parking lot islands, wide tree lawns, and buffer/median strips<sup>13</sup>.

**Care:** When transplanted small (not root-bound in pots prior to planting) and given adequate water, live oaks grow rapidly<sup>16</sup>. They are tolerant of a wide range of soil moisture, pH, and compaction<sup>8</sup>. Live oaks prefer full sun but can tolerate more shade. Pruning is only necessary in the early years (during mid-late summer) to develop a strong central leader and firm branch structure<sup>6</sup>. Plant so root flare is visible at soil surface<sup>14</sup>. At planting, water the root ball daily with two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for two weeks, every other day for two months and then weekly until established. Modify water recommendations to reflect site drainage and rainfall. Apply 3" of mulch over the planted area. Do not allow mulch to touch the trunk<sup>14</sup>. Give it plenty of room since the trunk can grow to more than six feet in diameter<sup>13</sup>.

**Pests:** Plants are relatively pest resistant if cultural preferences are met. Scales of several types can be controlled with horticultural oil sprays. Aphids are often naturally taken care of by

predatory insects. Newly planted young trees need to be treated with regular fertilization and water during dry weather to keep as healthy as possible<sup>13</sup>.

This plant does not appear on the following invasive plant lists on (10/20/2023):

\_x\_ USDA SC Invasive Plant Species Web site at <http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/plants/main.shtml>

\_x\_ SC Exotic Plant Pest Council Web site at <http://www.se-eppc.org/southcarolina/>

**Image:**



**Image source:**

<https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fstock.adobe.com%2Fsearch%2Fimages%3Fk%3Doak&psig=AOvVaw1aZtNcaYqQ9mibVBcEzbKZ&ust=1697892068986000&source=images&cd=vfe&opi=89978449&ved=0CA4QjRxqFwoTCPjhZDThIIDFQAAAAAdAAAAABAI>

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- (17) USDA. *Plant wetland indicator status*. (n/d). Retrieved from <http://plants.usda.gov/wetland.html>
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**Woody Plant Profile: *Quercus virginiana***  
Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place

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\*Soil pH is determined using a professional soil test. Contact your Clemson University County Extension service for assistance [www.clemson.edu/extension/](http://www.clemson.edu/extension/). Click on "local offices".

\*\*2012 Plant Wetland Indicator categories (quantitative derived) <http://plants.usda.gov/wetinfo.html>

Indicator Code	Indicator Status	Comment
OBL	Obligate Wetland	Almost always is a hydrophyte, rarely in uplands
FACW	Facultative Wetland	Usually is a hydrophyte but occasionally found in uplands
FAC	Facultative	Commonly occurs as either a hydrophyte or non-hydrophyte
FACU	Facultative Upland	Occasionally is a hydrophyte but usually occurs in uplands
UPL	Obligate Upland	Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands