

Bur Oak

Quercus macrocarpa



Bur oak, an excellent wildlife tree known to live for 200-300 years, is native to Aitkin County. 4"-10" leaves have a broad crown at the tip, which differentiates it from other native oak species. 1" acorns have a fringed cap that lends bur oaks their name. Bur oak acorns are eaten by deer, black bear, wild turkey, wood ducks, blue jays, and many other wildlife species. Seedlings and young branches are browsed by deer, elk, and moose. Red-tailed hawks, owls, and other birds nest in bur oak branches. Bur oak wood is durable and strong; wood is used for furniture, flooring, structural materials, and railroad ties.

Height: 25' to 80', depending on the suitability of the environment. Old, exceptional trees may grow >100'

Under favorable conditions, bur oak grows an extensive root system for the first 2-3 years, and will grow little above ground. After, seedlings will grow 8"-12" on average per year until the tree reaches maturity.

Planting environment:

Soil composition: Sandy, sandy loam, clayey loam

Soil moisture: Dry, well-drained to moist; intolerant of flooding but drought-tolerant

Sunlight: Intermediate (mixed sun and shade)

Bur oak seedlings should be spaced 12'-18' apart if planted for a windbreak, and 20'-25' apart if planted for crop or wildlife habitat.

Maintenance:

Because young bur oak grows slowly, encroaching vegetation that may outcompete saplings should be controlled. If growing on moist soils where bur oak is less dominant, additional seedling plantings ensure that bur oak is well-represented. Once trees reach maturity and develop thick, fire-resistant bark, consider controlled burns to eliminate unwanted vegetation.

Top diseases/pests:

1. Oak wilt
2. Bur oak blight

