Tree Factsheet

Quercus macrocarpa

Common Name: Bur oak

French Name: Chêne a gros fruits

This **Large** tree can grow up to **30** metres tall.

General information:

Quercus macrocarpa, the bur oak, sometimes spelled burr oak, is a species of oak in the white oak section Quercus sect. Quercus, native to North America in the eastern and central United States and eastern and central Canada. This plant is also called mossycup oak and mossycup white oak. Quercus macrocarpa is widespread in the Atlantic coastal plain from New Brunswick to North Carolina, west as far as Alberta, eastern Montana, Wyoming, and northeastern New Mexico. The vast majority of the populations are found in the eastern Great Plains, the Mississippi–Missouri–Ohio Valley, and the Great Lakes region.

Description and characteristics:

Quercus macrocarpa is a large deciduous tree growing up to 30 m, rarely 50 m, in height, and is one of the most massive oaks with a trunk diameter of up to 3 m; reports of taller trees occur, but have not been verified. It is one of the slowest-growing oaks, with a growth rate of 30 cm per year when young. However, other sources state that a bur oak tree that is planted in the ground grows up to 91 cm per year. A 20-year-old tree will be about 6 m tall if grown in full sun. Naturally occurring saplings in forests will typically be older. Bur oaks commonly get to be 200 to 300 years old, and may live up to 400 years. The bark is a medium gray and somewhat rugged.

The leaves are 7–15 cm long and 5–13 cm broad, variable in shape, with a lobed margin. Most often, the basal two-thirds is narrower and deeply lobed, while the apical third is wider and has shallow lobes or large teeth. The flowers are greenish-yellow catkins, produced in the spring. The acorns are very large, 2.5–5 cm long and 2–4 cm broad, having a large cup that wraps much of the way around the nut, with large overlapping scales and often a fringe at the edge of the cup.

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