**Introduction**

This North American native oak reaches 30 to 80 feet in height and makes an attractive shade tree, with handsome scaly gray bark. The green, lobed leaves are deciduous but do not change color before dropping in fall. The insignificant, green, spring flowers are followed by small acorns, less than one-inch-long. The trunk often grows straight up through the crown with little pruning, and branches are well spaced along the trunk. This is one of the oaks which is not currently available in most nurseries, but it should be. Urban tree managers will want this oak once they find out about it.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Quercus austrina*
- **Pronunciation:** KWERK-us oss-TRY-nuh
- **Common name(s):** Bluff oak
- **Family:** Fagaceae
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 8A through 9B (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** native to North America
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Uses:** reclamation; street without sidewalk; shade; specimen; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; highway median
- **Availability:** not native to North America

**Description**

- **Height:** 40 to 60 feet
- **Spread:** 35 to 50 feet

Figure 1. Middle-aged *Quercus austrina*: bluff oak
Credits: Ed Gilman, UF/IFAS

Figure 2. Range
Crown uniformity: symmetrical  
Crown shape: oval, round  
Crown density: open  
Growth rate: moderate  
Texture: medium

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: lobed, entire  
Leaf shape: obovate  
Leaf venation: pinnate  
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous  
Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: copper, yellow, orange  
Fall characteristic: showy

**Culture**

Light requirement: full sun  
Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; well-drained  
Drought tolerance: high  
Aerosol salt tolerance: unknown

**Other**

Roots: not a problem  
Winter interest: yes  
Outstanding tree: no  
Ozone sensitivity: unknown  
Verticillium wilt susceptibility: resistant  
Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

It would be well suited for planting in parking lots or along streets and boulevards where there is plenty of space for crown development. A row of bluff oaks planted on 30 foot centers lining each side of a street make a wonderful site. The medium-textured leaves make this oak stand out from other oaks. Upright to horizontal branching habit make this an easy tree to prune for vehicular clearance beneath the canopy.

Bluff oak should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil, and has good drought-tolerance.

*Quercus durandii* var. *austrina* is a synonym.

Propagation is by seed.

**Pest and Diseases**

No pests or diseases of major concern.