

***Quercus chapmanii*, Chapman Oak¹**

Michael G. Andreu, Melissa H. Friedman, Mary McKenzie, and Heather V. Quintana²

Family

Fagaceae, beech and oak family.

Genus

Quercus comes from the Latin name for “oak.” It is formed from two Celtic words: *quer* (“beautiful”), and *cuez* (“tree”).

Species

The species name, *chapmanii*, is after the physician and botanist A. W. Chapman (1809–1899), the first person to describe this species in his book titled “*Flora of the South-eastern United States*.”

Common Names

Chapman Oak, Chapman White Oak, Scrub Oak

The common name Chapman oak is a literal translation of its scientific name. Some may have added the word “white” to form the name “Chapman white oak” because it belongs to the white oak group, as opposed to the red oak group. The common name “scrub oak” is associated with this tree because it occurs in dry scrub habitats.



Figure 1. Leaves and acorns of *Quercus chapmanii*.

Credits: Homer Edward Price, (CC BY 2.0)

Description

This native oak is naturally found in the dry, xeric habitats of sandy ridges and coastal dunes throughout most of Florida and coastal Alabama, Georgia, and the southern portion of South Carolina. It is considered to be a small-statured tree rarely exceeding heights of 30 feet. Leaves are simple and alternate, and range from 1½ to 3½ inches long. Their shape can range from obovate or oblong, with the broadest part of the leaf below the rounded apex but above the middle portion. Leaves may exhibit a waviness or become slightly lobed, and the margins or edges are smooth. The topside of the leaf is a shiny dark green and the

1. This document is FOR 243, one of a series of the School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date May 2010. Reviewed February 2022. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the currently supported version of this publication.
2. Michael G. Andreu, associate professor of forest systems, School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; Melissa H. Friedman, former biological scientist, School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Plant City Center; Mary McKenzie, former research assistant, School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; and Heather V. Quintana, former research assistant, School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

underside is a dull light green to almost yellow, with pubescence (tiny hairs) along the midvein. The tardily deciduous leaves turn yellow or red in the fall and winter months, and by spring are no longer present on the tree. Bark is a light gray to grayish brown color and has scaly plates. Each year acorns just under ½ inch in size are produced in pairs, and a gray cup encloses the top half of each brown nut.

Allergen

All members of the *Quercus* genus are known to produce large amounts of pollen, making both deciduous and evergreen oaks highly to extremely allergenic.

Applications

Horticultural

The Chapman oak is not grown for the same qualities attributable to many other oak species. However, at only 6 to 30 feet tall it can make for a quaint specimen during the fall and winter months when its leaves turn attractive shades of red and yellow, or in the spring when long catkins appear alongside its new growth.

Medicinal

Members of the *Quercus* genus contain a chemical known as tannin, which is the active chemical in most medicine made from oaks. Experiments have shown that this compound contains properties that prevent viruses, infections, and tumors. However, some tannins have been suspected of being carcinogenic.

Wildlife

Acorns of the Chapman oak provide a significant source of food to a variety of wildlife, ranging from birds to large mammals.

References

- Austin, D. F. 2004. *Florida ethnobotany*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Godfrey, R. K. 1988. *Trees, shrubs, and woody vines of Northern Florida and adjacent Georgia and Alabama*. Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press.
- Little, E. L. 2005. *National Audubon Society field guide to trees, Eastern region*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Nelson, G. 1994. *The trees of Florida: A reference and field guide*. Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press.

Ogren, T. L. 2000. *Allergy-free gardening: The revolutionary guide to healthy landscaping*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press.

Osorio, R. 2001. *A gardener's guide to Florida's native plants*. Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida.

Stein, J., D. Binion, and R. Acciavatti. 2003. *Field guide to native oak species of Eastern North America*. Morgantown, WV: USDA Forest Service.