

swamp white oak *Quercus bicolor*

Kingdom: Plantae

Division/Phylum: Magnoliophyta

Class: Magnoliopsida

Order: Fagales

Family: Fagaceae

ILLINOIS STATUS common, native

FEATURES

The swamp white oak is also known as the swamp oak. This deciduous tree may grow to a height of 70 feet with a trunk diameter of three feet. Its crown is broad and round. The bark is gray-brown, furrowed and flaky. Buds are clustered at the twig tips. Each yellow-brown bud may be one-eighth inch long. The simple leaves are arranged alternately along the stem. The leaf blade is broadest near the tip. The coarsely toothed leaf may be six inches long and four inches wide. The leaf is white and hairy on the lower surface. Male and female flowers are separate but are borne on the same tree. Flowers are tiny and lack petals. Male (staminate) flowers are in drooping catkins. Female (pistillate) flowers are in groups of two to four. The fruit is an acorn. Acorns grow in pairs on stalks one inch or longer. The pale-brown, ovoid nut is one to one and one-half inches long. The thick, hairy cup encloses the acorn for about one-third of its length.

BEHAVIORS

The swamp white oak may be found statewide in Illinois. It grows in low woods and swamps. Flowering occurs from April through May. The wood is used for making cabinets, for fence posts and for interior finishing.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

bottomland forests

Woodland Habitats

bottomland forests; southern Illinois lowlands

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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