

Common Name: **English Oak**

Genus: *Quercus*

Species: *robur*

Family: Fagaceae

AKA: Pendunculate Oak, Tanner's Bark Oak, British Oak, Common Oak



Historical Uses:

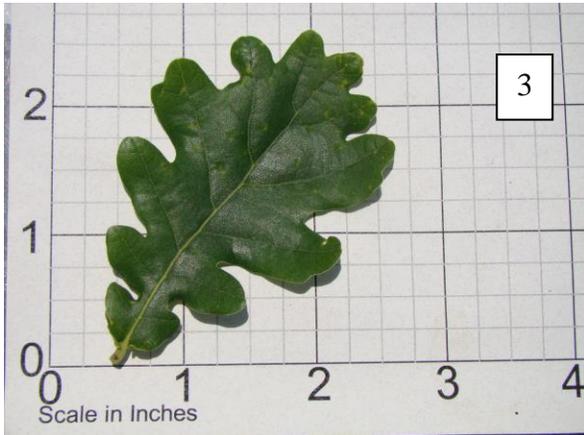
Medical: “The best of them, faith **Galen**, is the thin skin which is under the bark of the tree, and that next, which lay nearest to the pupae, or inner substance of the Acorn; all these stay the whites, the reds, spitting of blood and laskes: the decoction of these is given, or the powder of them dried, for the purposes aforesaid. The acorns provoke urine, and are good against all venom and poison, but they are not such at stopping and binding faculty as the leaves and bark. The oak apples are good against all flues of blood and laskes, in what manner so ever they be taken, but the best way is to boil them in red wine, and being so prepared they are good also against the excessive moisture and swelling of the jaws and almonds or kernels of the throat. The



decoction of Oak apples stay with a women's diseases, and causes the mother that is fallen down to return against to the natural place, if doe fit over the said decoction being very hot. The fame steeped in strong white wine vinegar, with a little powder of Brimstone, and the root of Ireos mingled together, and set in the Sun by the space of the month, makes the hair black, consumed proud and superfluous slush, “taketh away sun-burning, freckles, spots the morphed, with all deformities of the face, being washed therewith.” (1)

“The leaves of the bark of the oak, and the acorn cups, do bind and dry very much. The inner bark of the tree and the thin skin that cover the acorn, are most used to stay the spitting of blood and the bloody flux. The

decoction of that bark, and the powder of the cups do stay vomiting, spitting of blood, bleeding at the mouth, or other fluxes of blood in men or women: laske also, and the involuntary flux of natural seed. The acorn in powder, taketh with wine, provoke urine, and resisteth the poison of venomous creatures. The decoction of acorns and the bark made in milk, and taken, resisteth the force of poisonous herbs and medicines, as also the virulence of cantharides, when one by eating them hath his bladder ulcerated, and piss blood. Hippocrates said he used the fumes of oak leaves to women that were troubled with the strangling of the mother, and Galen applied them, being bruised to cure green wounds. The distilled water of the oaken buds, before they break out into leaves is good to be used either inwardly or outwardly, to assuage inflammations and to stop all manner



Typical lobed leaf of the English oak

of fluxes in man or woman. The same is singularly good in pestilential and hot burning fevers; for it resistant the force of the infection, and allayed the heat. It cooled the heat of the liver, breaks the stone in the kidneys, and stables a women's courses. The decoction of the leaves work the same effect. The water that is found in the hollow places of old oaks, is very effectual against any foul or spreading scabs. The distilled water of the leaves, is one of the best remedies that I know of for the whites in women." (2)

The Acorns also produce the same effects, they are also vreticall, being eaten for meat, they cause the head-ach and are windie, but being eaten they help poisonous biting's. And the decoction of them and the Barck help Toxicum, being drank with Cowes milke. But the unripe ones being beaten small, and so laid on as a Cataplasme doe assuage inflammations, and with swine's grease salted, they are good for ye malignae duritiae, and for ye malefica ulcera, but they of the Ilex are of greater strength, than those of ye Oak." (3)

Household: "Swine are fatted herewith" (4)

Oak galls were used to prepare inks as early as the 4th and 5th century.

Folklore/Astrology: "The leaves, barke, Acorne cups, and Acornes themselves, doe mightily binde and drie in the third degree, being somewhat cold withal." (5)

"Jupiter owns the tree." (6)

"The oak belongs to **Zeus**, who was born beneath its branches: this fact made the tree immune to the effects of his thunderbolts, although it was repeatedly struck by them. This tree, in a grove at Dodona, rustled without any wind: it stirred to announce the presence of the god who gave oracles there. **Athena** placed a piece of oak in the prow of **Jason's Argo** when he sought the Golden Fleece, which had been nailed to the trunk of an old

Oak tree. The tree is also sacred to **Odin** and **Thor**. Elves were always closely associated with the oak trees, and used the holes in their trunks as highways to wander about. The Erl King (Erlkönig) army, which was a grove of oaks by day, but a host of armed men by night. The oak is the emblem of hospitality, for it had sheltered a king. Passing over a cleft oaken branch preserved both men and dogs from witchcraft, and in Christian belief it is a symbol of strength of faith, virtue, and endurance in the face of adversity. Oak and myrtle leaves were entwined on sword hilts to mark the end of war, but the oak and the walnut are enemies to the death, and cannot be planted near each other. Many acorns on an oak foretold a hard winter. If the oak leafed out before the ash, the summer would be dry, but it would be wet if the ash came out first. An east wind made it difficult to strip bark from a felled oak. A tanner who used bark, from the fallen oak of St. Columba, to tan leather for his shoes was stricken with leprosy when he first put them on. Druids regarded the mistletoe of oaks as the best antidote to poison, the best remedy for vermin, and a certain cure for epilepsy; they also believed it to be capable of healing all wounds.” (7)



Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Bark, wood, nuts

Medicinal: “heal suppurating wounds and fistulas, stop menstrual flux, and the spitting of blood, and cure intestinal ulcers” “bring boils and abscesses to a head.” (8)

“A bitter, astringent, antiseptic herb that reduces inflammation and controls bleeding.”
“for diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhage, and prolapsed uterus or anus.” “for hemorrhoids, vaginal discharge, sore throat, bleeding gums, minor injuries, dermatitis, weeping eczema, ringworm, ulcers, and varicose veins.” (9)

Culinary: “The acorns provide fodder for pigs and are an emergency food for man” (10)

“Acorns can be ground into flour and roasted as a coffee substitute” (11)

Economic: “The wood is used for furniture, construction, farm implements, paneling, fuel, barrels, and shipbuilding” (12)

“Wood is traditionally used for making oak barrels that give a distinctive flavor to wine. Bark and galls are used in tanning, and also in dyeing, the color produced being dependent on the mordant.” (13)

Area of Origin: Europe to west Russia

Physical description: Large, deciduous tree with a broad crown, fissured bark, and very short-stalked, ovate-oblong leaves (14)

Plant type: Deciduous tree

Height: 80-120’

Flower color: Yellowish-green

Flowering period: April

Soil type/requirements: Deep, well-drained

Fruit: Acorns

Hardiness zone: USDA 4-10

Sun requirements: Full sun or partial shade

Propagation: By seed sown when ripe; by grafting in mid-autumn or late winter

Sources

1. Gerard, p. 1339-41
2. Culpepper, p. 107-8
3. Discorides, book 1, plant 143
4. Gerard, p. 1339-41
5. Ibid
6. Culpepper p. 107
7. Anderson, p. 261-64
8. Ibid
9. Bown, p. 339
10. Anderson p. 262
11. Bown, p. 339
12. Anderson p. 262
13. Bown, p. 339
14. Ibid

Illustrations/Images:

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| 1. Dover Scans | 1997 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2015 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2015 |
| 4. Drachs Herbal | 1490 |