



Red Oak

Quercus rubra

Height: 20-25 m

Spread: 15-20 m

Native to: Eastern North America

Grows in: Parks, forests and ravines

Friends with: Often grows with Sugar Maple and Basswood

Red Oak: Strong and Reliable

- Red Oak trees grow slowly and can live for hundreds of years! In fact, Toronto's oldest tree is a 250 year old Red Oak.
- Red Oak's long life expectancy means that a single tree can provide food and shelter for generations of people and animals.

How to Identify

- Young bark is smooth and dark grey, becoming grooved with age.
- Buds appear in clusters and are pointed, shiny and reddish brown.
- Leaves have seven to eleven lobes with sharply pointed ends. They turn red, russet, brown, and sometimes orange in fall.
- Lookalikes: White Oak leaves have rounded lobes. Scarlett Oak leaves have deeper lobes and pointier tips, and an even brighter red fall colour than Red Oak.

Can you count the lobes
on this Red Oak leaf?



Flowers and Seeds

- In spring, drooping clusters of small flowers, called catkins, appear. The female flowers turn into acorns in the fall.
- Red Oak's seeds are called acorns. They start green and turn brown in the fall.

Traditional and Historical Uses

- Indigenous communities have used oak trees for their medicinal properties. Oak tree bark has tannins (natural chemicals) that make it useful for treating infections, healing wounds, and helping with stomach problems.
- Red Oak's wood is often used to make furniture, and its acorns can be used to make flour.



Red Oak buds
and acorn

Toronto's Urban Forest

- Toronto's urban forest includes trees, shrubs and plants that help keep Toronto healthy, vibrant and full of life.
- These leafy companions support local wildlife, help many plants and animals live and grow, and protect our neighbourhoods from noise and rain.
- Trees clean the air we breathe and create shady places to gather, play and explore.



Vote Red Oak for Tree of the Year!

Kids can vote for Toronto's 2027 Tree of the Year during Kids Vote Weekend, taking place at all 50 advance voting places on October 10 and 11.

By participating, kids will learn about the voting process and help support the City's goal of reaching a 40% tree canopy by 2050.



Fun Facts:

- Many animals love Red Oak's acorns, including blue jays, chipmunks, deer, squirrels and turkeys.
- Red Oak's leaves provide important food for caterpillars, which later turn into moths and butterflies.
- Red Oak grows deep root systems that help them to stay strong in storms and prevent soil erosion.