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ACORN TESTERS NEWS

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Ken Asmus  
721 Fletcher  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3077

David A. Bainbridge  
Drylands Research Institute  
U.C. Riverside, CA 92521

Miguel B. Marquez Jr.  
El Paso, Texas

Introduction: Many oaks (Quercus) have acorns that could be used as food. The Oak Testers Group is particularly interested in selections that are not bitter and do not have to be leached before eating. In short, we are looking for sweet acorns. Enough information has been collected by our group to show that many possibilities exist for Quercus. A fair amount of written information exists on oaks but there is very little on the individuals that should be grafted and preserved, and very few people are out looking for better selections and developing cultivars for release. I hope you will help by keeping your eyes open, sampling acorns, and reporting your discoveries to us.

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Gene Ulrich  
Enid, Oklahoma

Species: Bur Oak and Emory Oak  
(Q. macrocarpa and Q. emoryi)

Selections: Enid tree that produces heavily as young tree. Acorns are sweet but bland. Emory oak acorns that are larger than usual with good flavor and texture.

Comments: Has noticed hybrids with Q. lyrata that produce sweet acorns also.

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Bill Sproul  
Northport, Washington

Species: Oregon White Oak  
(Q. garryana)

Selection: By accident found an excellent tasting Oregon white oak. However, the acorns were found in the town dump so the original tree is a mystery. These were highly rated by another member. (Possibly a reject from Bear Creek Nursery - ed: Bur/Gambel n?)

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Martin Ludeke  
Standardsville, Virginia

Species: Live Oak  
(Q. virginia<sup>a</sup>)

Selection: Has found many good selections that compare equally with a sweet chestnut. Productivity is also good. However, hardiness is limited to Zone 8.

Comments: Swamp Chestnut Oak is an inconsistent bearer but productivity is good when the acorns are formed. This species is better than white oak but not as good as Bur Oak. Bur Oaks exist in Northern Iowa and southern Minnesota.

Species: Coast Live Oak, Emory Oak, California White Oak, Live Oak, Burr Oak, Gambels Oak and many hybrids.

Selections: a giant acorn type. Q. macrocarpa 'Bing' from Victoria, Texas has crossed many species but so far no sweet acorns have resulted.

Q. macrocarpa 'Ashworth' from New York a selection with sweet acorns with good production.

Q. lobata is very fast growing and tolerates arid conditions and has some sweet acorns.

Q. emoryi needs an arid soil or grows in volcanic derived soil.

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David Bainbridge  
Drylands Research Institute  
UC Riverside, CA 92521

Sweet Acorns and Good Flavor

Q. gambellii, S.W. Colorado: almost sweet, bland.

Q. emoryi??, Oak Creek Canyon near Sedona, AZ: chocolaty, slightly bitter.

Q. mongolica, Berkely, California: excellent tree, sweet, large acorns. Mild.

Q. vaccinifolia, Sierra Nevada: Most sweet, some flavor but small.

Q. macrocarpa, Illinois: sweet, some flavor.

Q. rubra??, Portland: cashew flavor, bitter aftertaste.

People have reported to me as sweet:

Q. virginia<sup>a</sup>: flavor excellent

Q. dumosa: flavor ok.

Q. lobata

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Robert Kurlle  
Hursdale, Illinois

Has found that grafting Bur Oaks is relatively easy. (The success rate is quite good).

Ralph Kneder  
Hammond, Illinois

Species: Bur Oak hybrids

Selections: Has grafted selections of Hershey's Oaks. Also Bur x English and Bur x Chinkapin crosses.

Comments: Has found that sweetness of acorns is a very subjective experience and thinks ripeness is important in flavor. His Bur x English selection is a large nut and produces more regularly than his white oak selections including "lint:"

Ken Asmus  
Kalamazoo, MI

Species: Bur Oak and English Oak

Selections: Bur x white hybrid (Q. macrocarp. x Q. alba)  
English Oak (Q. robur)

Comments: My bur x white hybrid is the sweetest acorn I have found to date. The tree's productivity is uncertain, the size of the acorn is 3/4 - 1 inch. This is about average for burr oak.

The English Oak I have been watching is one of many in a plantation. When I shook the tree to collect the acorns for my nursery, it literally rained acorns. I filled two five gallon pails. It is a 25 year old tree.

Hybrid vigor has shown up in seedlings. I am separating these out for faster oaks. One seedling at two years of age is 30 inches tall and branched. This is unusual for bur oak where 12 - 18 inches is average for two years growth.

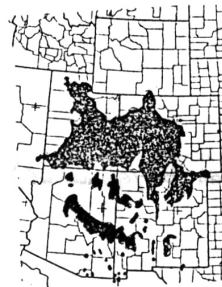
Please write us if you wish to continue to receive the Testers News. Initially subscriptions will be limited to cooperating testers and magazines and research institutions. If contributions allow we will open up a wider distribution.

#### GAMBEL OAK

*Quercus gambelii*



Leaves—alternate, deciduous, not leathery, often reverse-egg-shaped, 2 to 4 in. long, bright green and shiny above, dull green and hairless or slightly fuscous (not so velvet) beneath, deeply lobed (usually over 1/2 way to midrib); lobes rounded at the tip and usually forming acute or nearly right angles with the midrib.



Range map.

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Smith, J.R. 1952. Tree Crops. Devin Adair.

Sholto Douglas, J. and Hart, R. 1984. Forest Farming. I.T. Public., N.Y.

Hightshoe, G.L. 1978. Native Trees for Urban and Rural America, I.S.U., Ames.

Seedlings and Seed Sources For Oaks.

Abundant Life Seed Production P.O. Box 772  
Port Townsend, Washington 98368

Redwood City Seed Company P.O. Box 361  
Redwood City, CA Native California Species

Oikos 721 Fletcher  
Kalamazoo, MI 49007-3077 Seeds of Chestnut Oak, European Oak

Miguel B. Marquez Jr. 4737 Guadalupe Dr.  
El Paso, Texas 79904 Scions and seeds of many southern U.S. species

Smith Nursery P.O. Box 515  
Charles City, Iowa 50616 Wide variety of oaks

Woodlanders 1128 Colleton Ave., S.E.  
Aiken, S.C. 29801 " "

Herbst Brothers 1000 N. Main  
Brewster, NY 10509 " "

Decorah Nursery Box 125  
Harpers Ferry, Iowa Q. muelenberghi

Bear Creek Farms P.O. Box 248  
Northport, WA 99157 Several hardy oaks

Calaveras Nursery 1622 Highway 12  
Valley Springs, CA 95252 Virtually all the tree type California oaks. Plus some introduced