

“They are beautiful in their peace,
They are wise in their silence.
They will stand after we are dust.
They teach us, and we tend them.”

G.A. MacDunelmor



BASIC GROWING
REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUR
Oak Trees



THE LAND CONSERVANCY
OF MCHENRY COUNTY

“Preserving Land Forever”

The Oak forests of northern Illinois have taken centuries to develop and deserve to be regarded as an irreplaceable landscape legacy. Certain conditions provided by the forest community as a whole are vital to the life of an Oak tree. These conditions must be either preserved or successfully simulated.

Soil: Non-native plants, including lawns, will rob the life out of your Oaks. These plants are considered a competitive, non-cooperative ecosystem with a completely different set of requirements.

The key to planting under Oaks without killing them is to use native species that have the same water requirements (little to no summer irrigation). This means lawn grass is OUT!

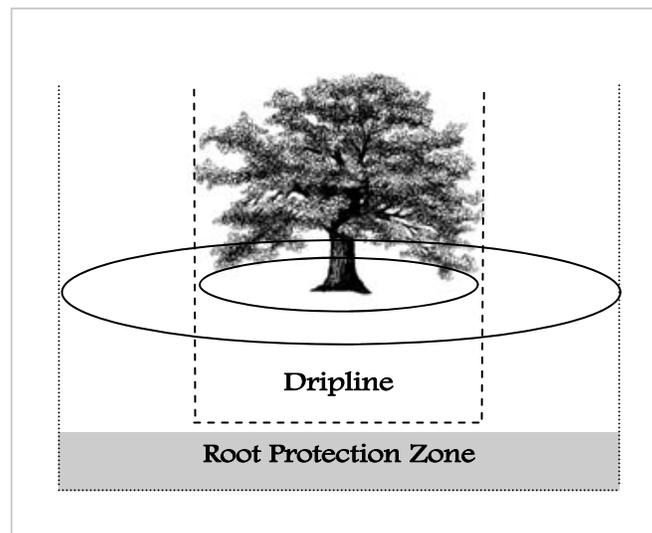
- Do use native plants that live under the canopy of the Oak: Wild Geranium, Virginia Bluebells, Shooting Star, Nodding Wild Onion, Solomons Seal, Columbine, Trillium, Penn Sedge, Mayapples, Woodland Sunflower and Cinnamon Fern to name a few.

Mulch: Though store-bought mulch provides organic materials, it cannot work alone.

- Do let the natural Oak mulch form a thick, soft, moist mulch under the Oak. This will release nutrients back into the soil, moderate the soil temperature, and support the complex soil foodweb that is most beneficial to the tree.
- Don't pile mulch next to the trunk—make a “donut” a few inches away from the trunk.
- Do try to mulch the entire dripline with two to four inches

Roots: The most active portions of the oak's root system occupies the few inches closest to the surface. Oak roots spread wide, but not very deep, and are **extremely** sensitive to environmental change (soil compaction, altered soil grade, increased moisture, paving) Oaks are put under a tremendous amount of stress when construction is performed around or near their roots. Keep this area relatively undisturbed .

- Do protect the root zone from compaction from heavy machinery, vehicles or livestock. When it cannot be avoided, put protection down—like plywood boards.



- Do make sure that your landscaping service understands the special care that the Oak's root systems require.

Water: Our Oaks have evolved to live in our region—wet winters and dry summers. When water is introduced into the root zone during the warm summer months, the root pathogens living in the soil grow vigorously and attack the Oak roots fiercely, and the tree begins a long, slow decline.

- Don't water mature Oaks unless there is a severe drought.

- Do provide regular irrigation to newly planted oaks until they are established, usually two to three years.

Fertilizer: The salts in many fertilizers, especially soluble nitrogen, can predispose trees to insect and other problems.

- Don't apply fertilizers under Oaks unless it is a slow-release, insoluble fertilizer.

Fungicides and Insecticides: Trees that are stressed due to weather, construction or invasive pests sometimes require therapeutic care.

- Do remember that there are a lot of good fungi that Oaks require to survive.
- Do consult a trained professional before applying a fungicide or insecticide.

Pruning: Mature Oaks do not require pruning except to remove weakened, diseased or dangerous branches. If necessary, trees should be pruned in the dry season (November through March).

- Don't treat the wound with any kind of sealant. Trees heal themselves perfectly well. Sealant only encourages insects and disease by trapping moisture.
- Do consult a certified arborist before pruning



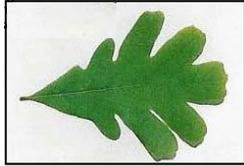
In the spring, look around
your yard for
baby Oaks & Hickories!

Flag these new trees
so you don't mow them.

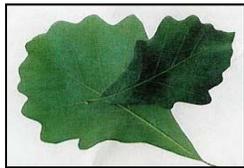
Common Oaks/Hickories of McHenry County



-Bur Oak
Quercus Macrocarpa



-White Oak
Quercus Alba



-Swamp White Oak
Quercus Bicolor



-Northern Red Oak
Quercus Rubra



- Black Oak
Quercus Velutina



- Shagbark Hickory
Carya Ovata

How Old is My Tree?

(estimate)

Diameter (Inches)	Bur/Swamp White Oak	Red Oak	White Oak	Shagbark Hickory
10	66	76	84	102
20	129	141	159	167
30	192	203	229	223
40	254	263	298	274

Help ensure that your “Mighty Oaks” will continue to be a source of beauty and enjoyment for many years to come by recognizing their basic growing requirements.

FOR MORE TREE CARE INFORMATION:

The Care of Trees
847-382-4120
www.TheCareOfTrees.com

The Davey Tree Expert Company
847-426-8889
www.Davey.com

NATIVE LANDSCAPING INFORMATION:

Citizens for Conservation
847-382-SAVE
www.CitizensForConservation.org

**Wildflower Preservation
& Propagation Committee**
www.theWPPC.org

McHenry County Conservation District
815-338-6223
www.MCCDistrict.org

PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION INFORMATION:

Barrington Area Conservation Trust
847-381-4291
www.BHCtrust.org

The Land Conservancy of McHenry County
815-337-9502
www.ConserveMC.org