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History Of Oak Trees, Quercus Sp.

By Pat Malcolm

Heroditus, the father of ancient history, recorded in the mid-400's B.C., that oak trees were reputed

to have within their boughs, the gift of prophecy. The presence of oak tree galls in oak trees is caused by insect larvae that tunnel inside the twigs. The oak tree branches can become infested with numerous little galls that look like brown or tan balls, as the cells of the oak tree grow to surround the insects inside. Some cultures call these creations, 'Oak Apples,' and they are used commercially to produce tannins, ink and a wide assortment of medicinal remedies. The use of oak wood is well known as a hard wood with many uses reported in ancient times.

It is not an easy task to write about the history of oak trees, because there are so many species, all having different stories of their own in historical development of tree lines, having evolved in different climates in different nations of the World. William Bartram in 1773 wrote in his book, 'Travels', that he slept underneath the "protecting shade of the hospitable live oak, and reclined my head, and at Fort Frederica, Ga. "under the whole spreading boughs that opened a spacious avenue leading to the former seat of General Oglethorpe." One live oak tree called the Wesley Oak, named after the founder of the Methodist Church, John and Charles Wesley, was used to carve out a rugged, wooden cross, that is still used at the altar of the Christ's Episcopal Church on St. Simon's Island, Georgia, also the island site of Fort Frederica, Georgia.

Over the last several hundred years, all around the world, different varieties of Oak Trees have been discovered; six hundred plus. Oak trees are desired among the gardening world for many different reasons. Some gardeners like the old world appeal of swooping oak tree limbs, covered with hanging Spanish moss. Some may like to plant them for shade trees, but what is probably the most famous association of oak trees are on the old plantations of the south. Innumerable forests of oak trees, neatly trimmed and brimming with wildlife, nibbling away at the acorns.

There are several classifications of oak trees: Deciduous Varieties: Pin Oak Tree, *Quercus palustris*; Sawtooth Oak Tree, *Quercus acutissima*; Willow Oak Tree, *Quercus phellos*; White Oak Tree, *Quercus alba*; Water Oak Tree, *Quercus nigra*; Turkey Oak Tree, *Quercus laevis*; Swamp Chestnut Oak Tree, *Quercus michauxii*; Shumard Oak Tree, *Quercus shumardii*; Red Northern Oak Tree, *Quercus rubra*; Red Southern Oak Tree, *Quercus falcata*; and the Post Oak Tree, *Quercus stellata*. There are

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also Evergreen Oaks: Laurel Oak Tree, *Quercus laurifolia*; and the Darlington Laurel Oak Tree, *Quercus hemisphaerica*. The two most famous however, are Semi-Evergreen: Live Oak Tree, *Quercus virginiana*; and Sand Live Oak Tree, *Quercus geminata*. All of these varieties produce acorns that vary in size from ½ inch to 1 ¼ inches.

In locations where Oak trees are not commonly found, certain varieties can be planted to attract wildlife. Smaller nut varieties are fed on by squirrels, and birds, and larger acorn varieties like the White Oak, and Gobbler Oak and Sawtooth Oak are eaten by deer, turkey, and boar. The White Oak tree is a great wildlife cultivar to plant because of its ability to ripen acorns within one year, and its above average growth rate. The Live Oak is commonly found in woods of the Southeastern United States. Pine trees are also found in large numbers in the Southeast, so there will certainly be turkeys out in the morning and evenings looking for live oak tree delicacies, gobbling invitations for their turkey friends to come down and join them in Thanksgiving for the Fall feast.

When Oak trees are planted for shade trees one must consider the overall height of the tree. The Black Oak Tree, and White Oak Tree can grow as tall as a hundred feet, whereas, the Water Oak and Sand Live Oak, and Chinquapin Oak will only reach fifty feet or there about. *Quercus rubra* or Northern Red Oak, one of the fastest growing oak trees, can reach towering heights of eighty feet in just about half the time that a Sand Live Oak takes to grow fifty feet, and is often a choice shade tree among new home builders.

Along the Georgia Coast at Sea Island, Georgia, oak trees have been planted around the main hotel, and since their opening in 1928, famous former Presidents, and dignitaries from around the world have planted a Live Oak tree to commemorate their stay at Sea Island, Georgia, even Former President George Herbert Walker Bush and former First Lady Barbara Bush honeymooned there. Lady Margaret Thatcher, former prime minister of Great Britain, planted a Live Oak at Sea Island in 1994. President G.H.W. Bush planted a Live Oak tree in 1991 while on vacation at the Cloister. On February 12, 1941, Howard Coffin, the founder of Sea Island, had planted a Live Oak tree grown from a seed brought from Surry England, to commemorate the founder and first Governor of Georgia, General James Oglethorpe, whose home was in England. Lastly, the most recent Live Oak trees planted on Sea Island, Georgia was in 2004 during the G-8 Summit, when President G.W. Bush, and British Prime Minister Tony Blair planted Live Oak trees at the inauguration of their meetings with the worlds economic leaders, at the G-8 Summit.

The chronological order in which Sea Island, Georgia memorial, and commemorative oaks were planted and are presently growing there.

1928: Calvin Coolidge planted the very first Live Oak tree at Sea Island when the Cloister Hotel opened for business.

1931: Howard Coffin, the founder of The Cloister at Sea Island planted a Live Oak tree to celebrate Georgia's founder and first Governor, James Oglethorpe.

1946: Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower honored his visit to Sea Island by planting the Eisenhower Oak Tree.

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1952: The Queen's Live Oak was planted by H.M. Juliana Queen of the Netherlands.

1979: The President Ford Oak tree was planted by Gerald R. Ford on one of his many visits to Sea Island, Ga.

1981: President Carter Live Oak tree was planted by Jimmy Carter.

1991: G.H.W. Bush Live Oak was planted while the Bush's were on vacation at The Cloister on Sea Island Georgia.

1994: Lady Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain planted a Live Oak while on vacation at Sea Island with her husband Sir Denis Thatcher.

2004: President George Walker Bush planted a Live Oak tree celebrating the hosting of the G-8 Summit.

2004: British Prime Minister Tony Blair planted a Live Oak to celebrate his presence at the Summit on Sea Island.

Patrick A. Malcolm, owner of TyTy Nursery, has an M.S. degree in Biochemistry and has cultivated fruit trees for over three decades.

<http://www.tytyga.com>

History Of Wildlife Food: Nuts, Berries, Fruits, And Acorns

By Pat Malcolm

For over 100 years hunting plantations have been planting fruit trees for wildlife food and shelter. Like the old English hunting plantations, today's hunters are realizing that big deer, strong bucks and graceful does, hardy turkey, fat quail, and dove come from supplementing what would otherwise experience a very mediocre diet by planting and growing berry plants, nut trees, fruit trees and acorns from oak trees, or muscadines from grapevines.

Fruit from Japanese persimmons are among the list of favorite deer food treats. The wild persimmon is not as common anymore, so by planting the Giant Fuyu persimmon an approach is to insure that the bucks and does will be in hot pursuit of these foods to grow reliably and economically by nature. When the lower limbs of the persimmon tree have been stripped of all its fruits, deer will often try to jump into the lower branches to get the plump, juicy tree fruits. Pears and crabapples also provide essential vitamins and minerals to grow bucks big, healthy antler racks: a food to keep the does growing fatter during hunting seasons.

The Kieffer pear is the best wildlife fruit tree for planting for doe and other wildlife, as it is a hard, long

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lasting fruit that ripens late in the year. With this characteristic as a fall wildlife food, deer hunters are able to hunt over the layers of pears at the beginning of deer season. The Dolgo crabapple tree can also be planted; the fruit ripens in early fall, so plant this wild fruit tree close to your deer stand for a guaranteed kill.

Turkey, dove, and quail tend to flock towards different fruit trees, nut trees, grapevines, and berry plants. Grape fruits are popular with quail and dove, and turkeys seem to like muscadine and scuppernong grapevines. When grape fruits ripen, it isn't unusual to see quail migrate in coveys to strip the grapes from their vines. Grapes have been planted by farmers for years as a growing blind to keep their crops concealed, and the small game supplied with food. When planting grapevines for wildlife feeding, one should also interplant other native fruit trees such as the Chickasaw plum, and American persimmon or for the grape vines growing and intertwining to create the screening effect that makes all deer and turkey, and quail feel safe to grow in a sheltered environment. Not only will you grow an impermeable screen with the grapevines you plant an added benefit of growing wild plums, and wild persimmons as a stable wildlife food for your deer daily diet, or birds, duck, and quail.

Quail in particular like to hide in the cover of blackberry bushes. More often than not in mid to late October, one can approach and examine the screening growth of a blackberry vine, before it loses its leaves to feed to the deer and turkey. Blueberries can be found growing wild everywhere, but wild blueberries tend not be as abundant as new hybrid berries. New blueberry plant selection supplies many wildlife animals. The same unpredictability happens with mayhaw fruit. Grafted cultivars of mayhaw can be planted in drier areas and to grow a reliable crop of fruit every year to feed the birds quail, dove, ducks, and turkey. Mayhaw fruits are also great for making mayhaw jelly; a buttered, hot biscuit's best friend.

Mulberry is a favorite food among small wildlife animals and big game birds alike, and the mulberry trees grow a substantial crop of berries over an extended time period. The mulberry tree is tall enough at an early age that birds and animals can freely feed on the mulberries on the upper limbs, while deer and other animals can eat the berries from the bottom fruited boughs.

For bird food in particular, one nut tree grows more feed opportunities for wildlife animals and birds than the rest; the Gobbler Sawtooth Oak. With acorn crops of oak trees maturing at only six years of age, birds, ducks, and squirrels get a wealth of healthy food nutrients from oak tree nuts called acorns. Chinquapin bushes and trees can be planted for deer food, as well as planting Chinese chestnut trees. Wildlife birds and animals prefer the flavor of these two nuts, which keep deer, animals, and other birds returning to eat both chinquapin and chestnut trees bare every year.

Every grower of pecan trees knows how birds and wildlife love to eat these nuts, especially the small, seedling pecan nuts or pecans with thin shells. Deer also get shelter near pecan trees and bucks can be seen underneath the pecan trees even in early spring, feeding on late maturing nuts that fall from the trees.

Of the many types of natural foods available for bird and animal wildlife, perhaps the one most widely natural and inexpensive food source comes from many species of oak trees growing abundantly in United States forests everywhere. These oaks are: Black Oak, *Quercus velutina*; Cherry Bark Oak,

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Quercus falcata v.pagodafolia; Chinquapin Oak, Quercus muelenbergii; Darlington Laurel Oak, Quercus hemisphaerica; Laurel Oak, Quercus laurifolia; Live Oak, Quercus virginiana; Nuttall Oak, Quercus nuttallii; Over Cup Oak, Quercus lyrata; Pin Oak, Quercus palustris; Post Oak, Quercus stellata; Red Northern Oak, Quercus rubra; Red Southern Oak, Quercus falcate; Running Oak, Quercus pumila; Sand Live Oak, Quercus geminata; Sawtooth Oak, Quercus acutissima; Shumard Oak, Quercus shumardii; Swamp Chestnut Oak, Quercus michauxii; Swamp White Oak, Quercus bicolor; Turkey Oak, Quercus laevis; Water Oak, Quercus nigra; White Oak, Quercus alba; and Willow Oak, Quercus phellos.

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