



Township of Bernards Shade Tree Commission

1 Collyer Lane, Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

email: shadetree@bernards.org

Website: http://www.bernards.org/boards_commissions/shade_tree/default.aspx

The Pin Oak (*Quercus pallustris*)

A common tree in our area, the Pin Oak (*Quercus pallustris*) is easily identified by its heavily notched leaf with 5 to 7 lobes and the tendency to retain its leaves over the winter. Its canopy is unique among oaks with ascending upper branches and weeping lower branches as it ages. This form makes it possible to distinguish the tree from red and white oaks at a distance. It is native to New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the mid-western states.

The pin oak's natural habitat is in acidic moist lowland soil but not consistently wet areas. However it adapts to areas having normal rainfall as long as the soil is not alkaline. It has a very straight trunk and is an attractive landscape tree that has an average life of 120 years whereas other oaks may live as long as 300 years.

Pin oak is not a favored wood for furniture production as are red and white oak. It has relatively fast growth and is tolerant of pollution. The acorns are an important food source for deer, squirrels, and many birds, especially migrating mallards and ducks in lowland areas.

Another interesting oak that is becoming more available is the willow oak (*Quercus phellos*). It is also a large tree but is distinguished by its small willow shaped leaves.