

Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place

South Carolina Urban and Community Forestry Council

Live Oak

Latin name: <i>Quercus virginiana</i>	Texture: Fine
Common name: Live Oak	Growth rate: Medium, long-lived
Zones: 8-10	Light: Full sun to part shade
Height & Width: 60-80'h x 60-120'w	Moisture: Medium
Type: Evergreen to semi-evergreen	Soil: Tolerant of wide variety
Habit: Spreading and rounded	Origin: Southern United States

Features: Mature trunks and horizontal branches are massive with age. Deep green fine textured leaves form a rounded canopy. Light below the canopy is often dappled. Old leaves are shed in late spring. Acorns are eaten by songbirds and other wildlife. Bark is strong, dark and blocky on older trees. Spanish moss dripping from branches adds to the mystique of the live oak.

Siting: Live oak requires ample above and below ground space. Place in an area with more than 200 square feet of total planting area; in a planting strip at least 7' wide; or place at least 6' from pavement or wall. Roots tolerate all soil textures, even compacted soil; tolerate both acid and alkaline soil pH; yet prefer well-drained soil. Plants are salt tolerant and wind resistant when cultural preferences are met. Live oaks are ideal street trees where space is plentiful. Their roots will heave sidewalks over time. They are superb choices for parks, botanical gardens, estates, and mansions. Select a suitable long term site-they may live 200-300 years or longer.

Care: Transplant while small for best success. Plant so root flare is visible in loose soil. Well-drained soil, full or partial sun, and moisture during establishment are ideal. At planting, water the root ball daily with two gallons of water per inch of trunk diameter for two weeks, every other day for two months, and then weekly until established. Modify water recommendations to reflect site drainage and rainfall. Do not over water or saturate the soil. Apply 3" of mulch over the planted area. Do not allow mulch to touch the trunk. Prune while young to develop branch structure. Develop one strong central leader and spaced branches along trunk.

Pests: Plants are relatively pest resistant if cultural preferences are met. Live oaks are susceptible to *Phytophthora* root rot (caused by *P. cinnamomi*) under the right conditions. It is unknown at this time whether live oak is a host for *P. ramorum*, (causal agent) of Sudden Oak Death.

Contact the SC Urban and Community Forestry Council at www.scurbanforestry.org for membership and additional information.

*Soil ph is determined using a professional soil test. Contact your Clemson University County Extension service for assistance www.clemson.edu/extension/. Click on "local offices".

Tree selected from the *Urban Tree Species Guide: Choosing the Right Tree for the Right Place*.

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Charleston, SC Angel Oak
Winner of the SCU&CF 2004 Heritage Tree Award