

# SWAMP WHITE OAK

*Quercus bicolor*

Deciduous. Swamp White Oak is native to Pennsylvania and there are several natural stands found in Schuylkill County. They are large trees, often 70' tall, and can have dark twiggy tufts making them look coarse and unkempt. The bark of mature trees is very thick, deeply and irregularly furrowed into broad, flat ridges. The leaves are 5"-6" long and 2"-4" wide and thick. Their silvery underside contrast with the dark shiny green top surface. Hence, the given Latin species name of *bicolor*. The fall color is dull brown to an occasional orange. The acorn cups are deep, slightly fringed, and on long thin stalks. The 1" acorns are usually in pairs. Squirrels seek the fine fat acorns all winter long. The male flowers appear as "beads" along growing catkins before opening. As this tree matures, the lower branches are down sweeping, the middle are horizontal, and the upper stand busily erect, making a broadly columnar outline. The Swamp white oak can live for 300-400 years. The wood is hard and strong and is valued for tight cooperage, mine timbers and cross-ties. Since this species makes up less than one percent of the forest composition, saving this species for its grandeur is advantageous to the ecosystem.



The Swamp White Oak is a new addition to the Baber Cemetery. Six were planted as part of the Arbor Day tree program in 2011. Five were planted along West Lake Road with one planted around the corner on Valley Road. Because the Swamp Oak is common in wet woods and swamps, bottomlands, and floodplains, they are suited for the area they were planted in adjacent to the pond which is fed by an underground spring coming from Sharp

Mountain.

