

# Four Common Oaks in Napa County

## Valley oak (*Quercus lobata*)<sup>1</sup>



**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, and deciduous; 2 to 4 inches long; margins typically have 9 to 11 deep, rounded lobes; dull green and often pubescent above, and pale green below.

**Flower:** Monoecious; male flowers in pendent yellow-green catkins ~ 1 to 2 inches long; female flowers are small, solitary or in clusters of 2-3, and occur in the leaf axils on current year's twigs; appearing in spring.

**Fruit:** Acorns; shape varies greatly but is usually conical or bullet-shaped; 1 to 2 inches long; caps may be shallow or deep and often have warty knobs; ripen in a single year.

**Twig:** Slender; gray-brown to brown; pubescent when young but smooth by second year; often bear the spherical galls of native wasps.

**Bark:** Younger bark is thin (up to 1 inch), gray, and checkered or shallowly fissured; older bark is darker gray, several inches thick, and deeply fissured with flattened ridges.

**Form:** Large deciduous tree with massive limbs, rounded & spreading crown; branches droop to ground.

## Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*)



**Leaf:** Alternate, evergreen, simple, elliptical to oblong, 1 to 2 1/2 inches long, thick and leathery, convex with edges turning down, spiny margins (holly-like), shiny green above, duller with fuzz in vein axils below.

**Flower:** Species is monoecious; males in long (2 to 4 inches) narrow drooping catkins, yellow-green; females inconspicuous reddish green spike in leafaxils.

**Fruit:** An elongated, narrow, light brown acorn, 1 to 1 1/2 inches long, pointy ends, often distinctly cone-shaped; scaly, gray-brown cap covers 1/4 to 1/3 of acorn, matures in one year in early fall.

**Twig:** Slender to moderate, initially quite fuzzy but later often completely smooth and gray-brown; end buds clustered, reddish brown, broadest at the base with a rounded tip.

**Bark:** Smooth, gray-brown when young, with age becomes darker with broad, lighter gray ridges.

**Form:** An evergreen, large (up to 100 feet tall) tree with a short trunk and numerous large, crooked, spreading branches. Crown spread often exceeds its height.

<sup>1</sup> All information taken from Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation

## Black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*)<sup>2</sup>



**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, deciduous; pinnately lobed (usually 7 lobes), each lobe is 3-toothed and bristle-tipped, sinuses may be shallow or deep; oblong or obovate in shape, 3 to 6 inches long; yellow-green, smooth and lustrous above and paler below.

**Flower:** Species is monoecious; inconspicuous, male and female flowers borne in separate aments (catkins), appearing with the leaves.

**Fruit:** Acorn, 1 to 2 1/2 inches long, reddish brown; cap is deep, covering about half the nut. Require 2 seasons to mature.

**Twig:** Red-brown, ridged, smooth or minutely hairy; terminal buds are large, pointed, clustered at twig ends.

**Bark:** Initially smooth and dark gray/black; when mature turning dark brown/black, broad, irregularly plated ridges, about 1 inch thick.

**Form:** A medium sized broad-leaved deciduous tree (40 to 80 feet tall and 1 to 2 1/2 feet in diameter) with an open, rounded top. At high elevations, it may occur as a large shrub.

## Blue oak (*Quercus kelloggii*)



**Leaf:** Alternate, simple, and usually deciduous (although trees on moist sites may retain leaves); 1 to 3 inches long; margins are usually wavy, but sometimes shallowly and irregularly lobed; upper side of leaf is distinctly bluish-green, especially later in the growing season, while the lower surface is pale green.

**Flower:** Species is monoecious; males are borne in pendent yellow-green catkins (aments); females are small, often solitary, and occur in the axils of leaves on current year's twigs; appearing in spring.

**Fruit:** Acorns; oval to gently tapering; 3/4 to 1 1/2 inches long; shallow caps with warty scales; ripen in 1 yr.

**Twig:** Stout, brittle, and gray to reddish brown.

**Bark:** Mature bark is light gray and checkered.

**Form:** A small to medium sized deciduous tree; seldom more than 60 feet tall and 2 feet in diameter. Open grown canopies are typically rounded with many crooked branches.

<sup>2</sup> All information taken from Virginia Tech Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation