

# Oaks of Palo Alto

Illustrated by Ann McMillan

This project is generously supported by Pat Bashaw & Gene Segre, Jeannie Duisenberg & Rich Hlava, and Marcia Pugsley & Kent Mather.

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Produced by Palo Alto Art Center in partnership with Canopy.

# INTRODUCTION

Created by the community, for the community in 1971, the Palo Alto Art Center is your place to see and make art, activate your creativity and expand your community. We engage more than 150,000 people annually through a diverse range of programs that include free-admission exhibitions, classes and workshops for all ages, school programs, and special events.

Community partnerships continue to be a vital aspect of the Art Center's work. One of the key components of the Art Center's 2019 strategic framework is heightened community engagement. Our *Rooted: Trees in Contemporary Art* exhibition provided a unique opportunity to work more closely with one of our most valued community partners, Canopy. In early discussion with Canopy, their staff highlighted the benefit of a field guide that could provide illustrations as part of their Great Oak Count. Right away, we thought of artist Ann McMillan, one of the wonderful instructors in our adult studio program.

We would like to thank Ann for her inspired and dedicated work on this guide, and for her commitment to sharing—through art—her remarkable powers of observation. We would like to thank the donors who supported this initiative as well as Susan Rosenberg, who combines her love of trees and art with a valuable investment that made the *Rooted* exhibition and public programs possible.

—Karen Kienzle, Palo Alto Art Center Director

# CANOPY AND THE GREAT OAK COUNT

Canopy's mission is to grow urban tree canopy in mid-peninsula communities for the benefit of all. We envision a day when every resident of the mid-peninsula can step outside to walk, play, and thrive under the shade of healthy trees.

The City of Palo Alto's urbanized matrix is characterized by a diverse, mature, abundant, and well-managed urban forest offering one of the highest tree canopy cover rates in the region (38% average). Pre-settlement, the landscape was primarily an oak savanna punctuated by riparian corridors. Dominant native tree species included Valley oak—*Quercus lobata*, Coast live oak—*Quercus agrifolia*, and willow stands.

Several waves of urbanization spelled the disappearance of many old oaks largely through removals and improper care. Iconic oaks were supplanted by non-native species deemed better adapted to the many constraints and stressors of the urban environment. In the late 1990s, responding to residents' concerns over the deterioration of Palo Alto's urban canopy, the City Council adopted a tree ordinance to protect native oaks.

Canopy's first project in 1997 was the launch of the *Oakwell Survey*, a major effort to survey and map Palo Alto native oaks. Volunteers surveyed over 9,000 native oaks on public and private property



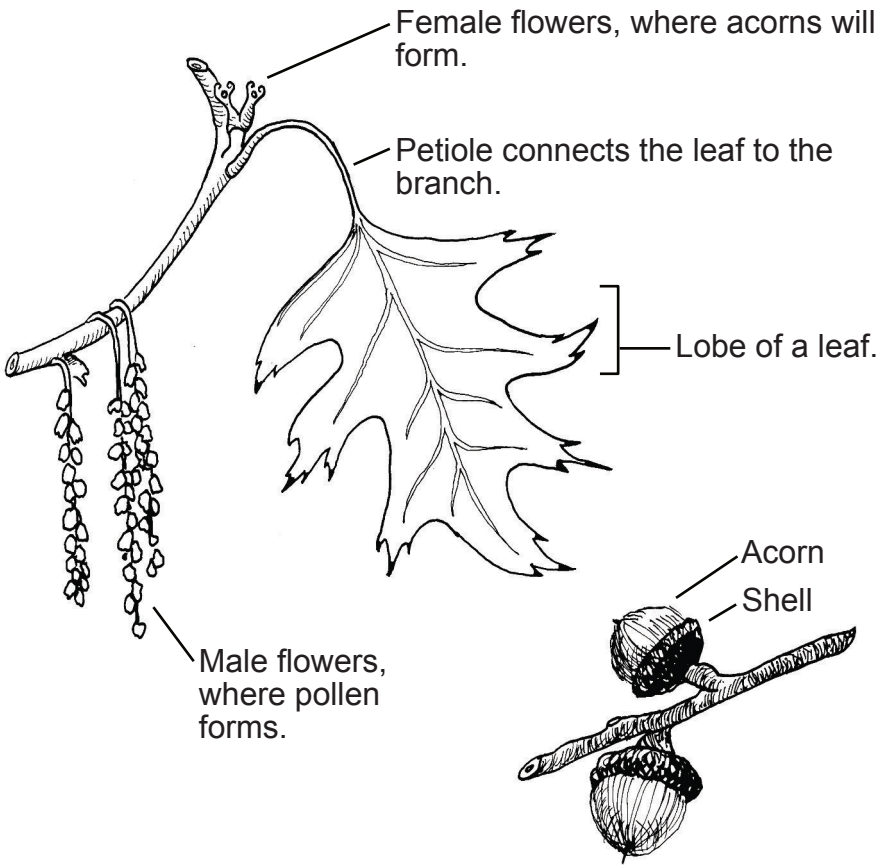
(13,000 counting stands), with high quality results that constitute the only known comprehensive urban oak dataset in the country.

Fast forward twenty years, and in 2017 Canopy launched The Great Oak Count to once again find and survey all the Coast live oaks, Valley oaks, Blue oaks, and California black oaks in Palo Alto. Through this update we will learn how the oak population has changed, and guide re-establishment efforts in the future.

Native oaks are adapted to our climate, critical for wildlife, hold historic and cultural significance and are one of the key components of establishing resilient landscapes in the mid-peninsula. In addition to our local native oaks, oaks from other regions of the world boast impressive traits that qualify them for planting in the urban environment. Today, there is increasing recognition that re-integrating oaks in our parks and urban landscapes promises a host of benefits, both for wildlife and for people. Planting, stewarding, protecting and managing these trees is an important part of maintaining a thriving urban forest.

We hope this guide inspires you to look more closely at the oaks in your neighborhood, and that you discover the beauty, diversity and promise of these unique trees across Palo Alto.

# OAK ANATOMY



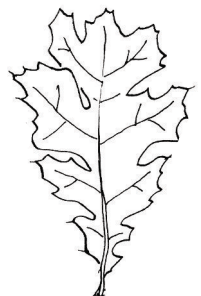
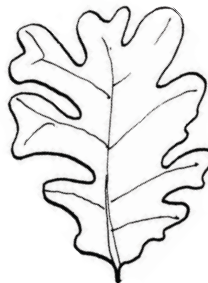
Common oak leaf shapes:

smooth

toothed

lobed & smooth

Lobed & toothed

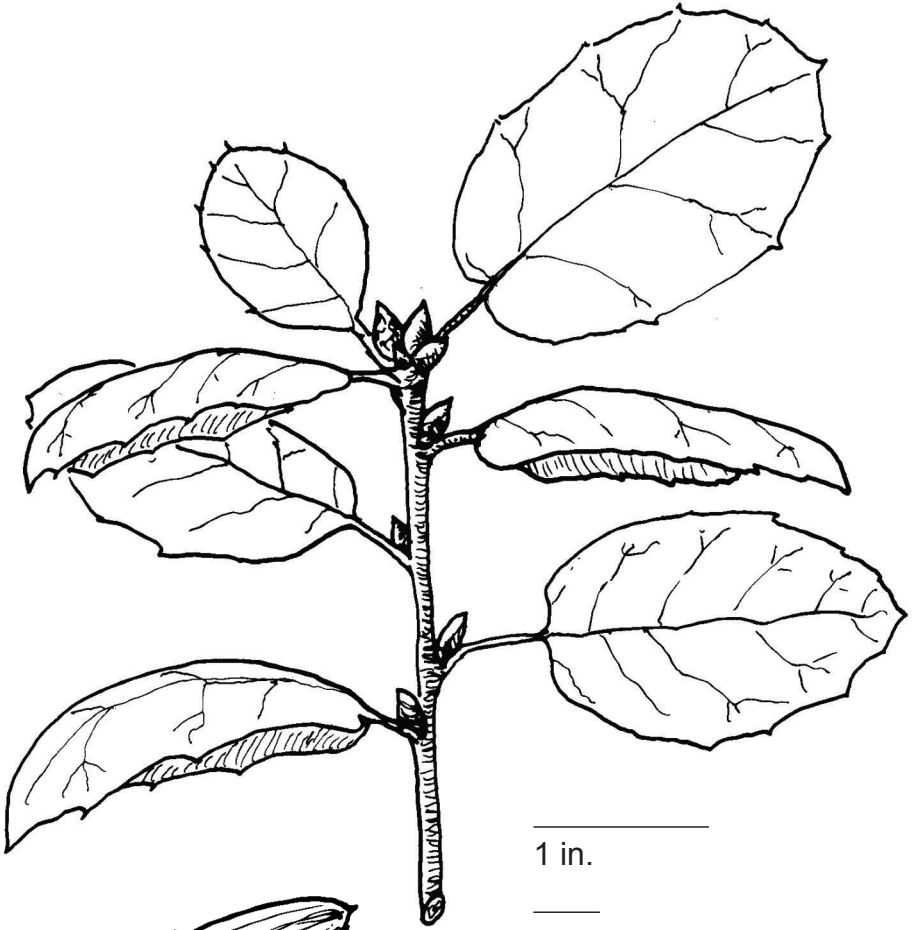


**OAKS NATIVE TO  
PALO ALTO AND  
CALIFORNIA**



# COAST LIVE OAK

*Quercus agrifolia*

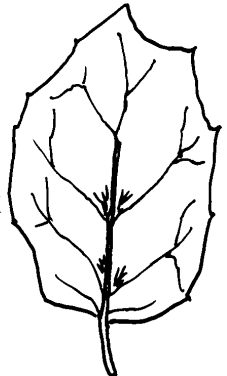


1 in.

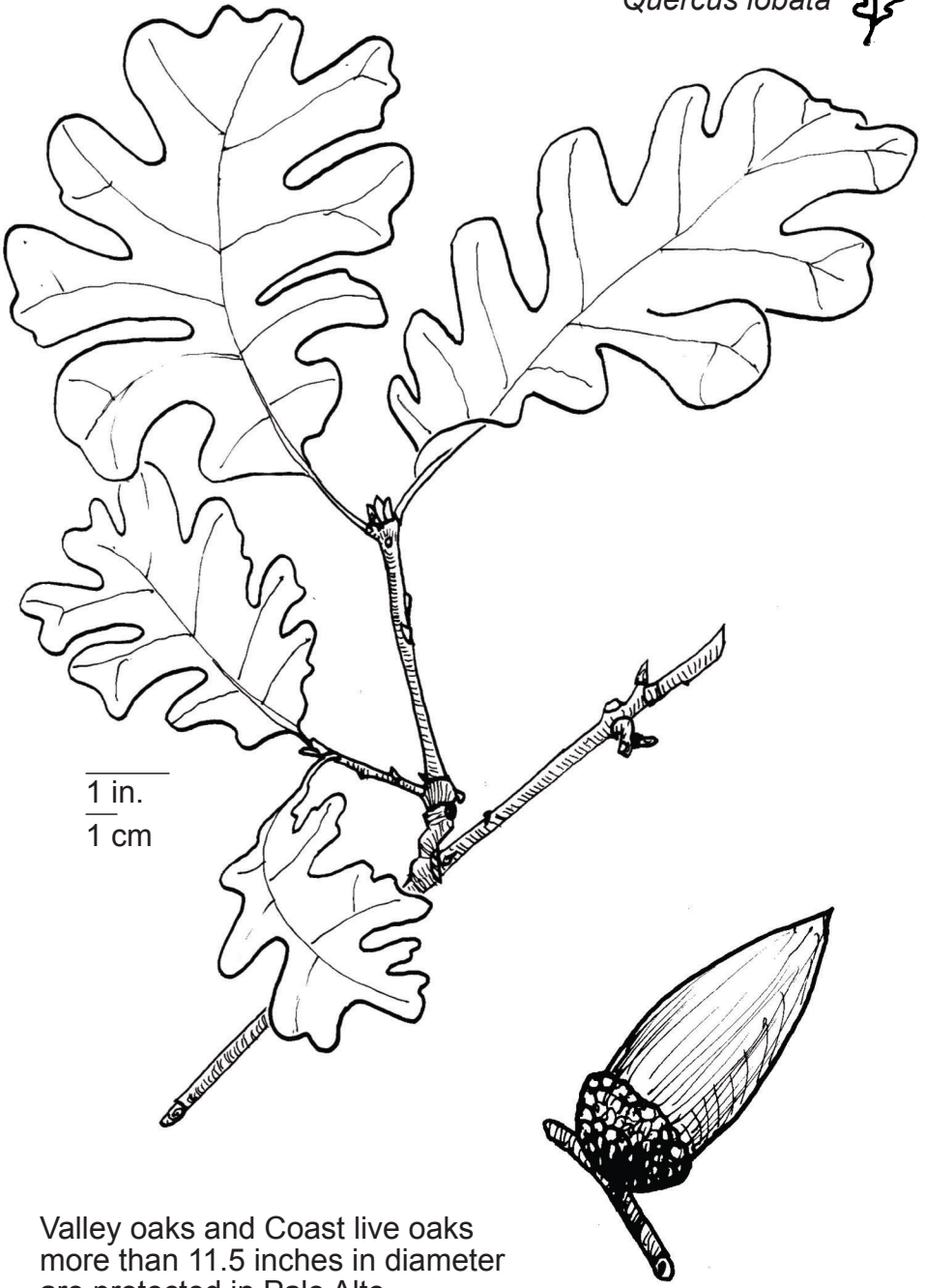
1 cm



The underside of a Coast live oak leaf, showing hairs at leaf axils.



**VALLEY OAK**  
*Quercus lobata*

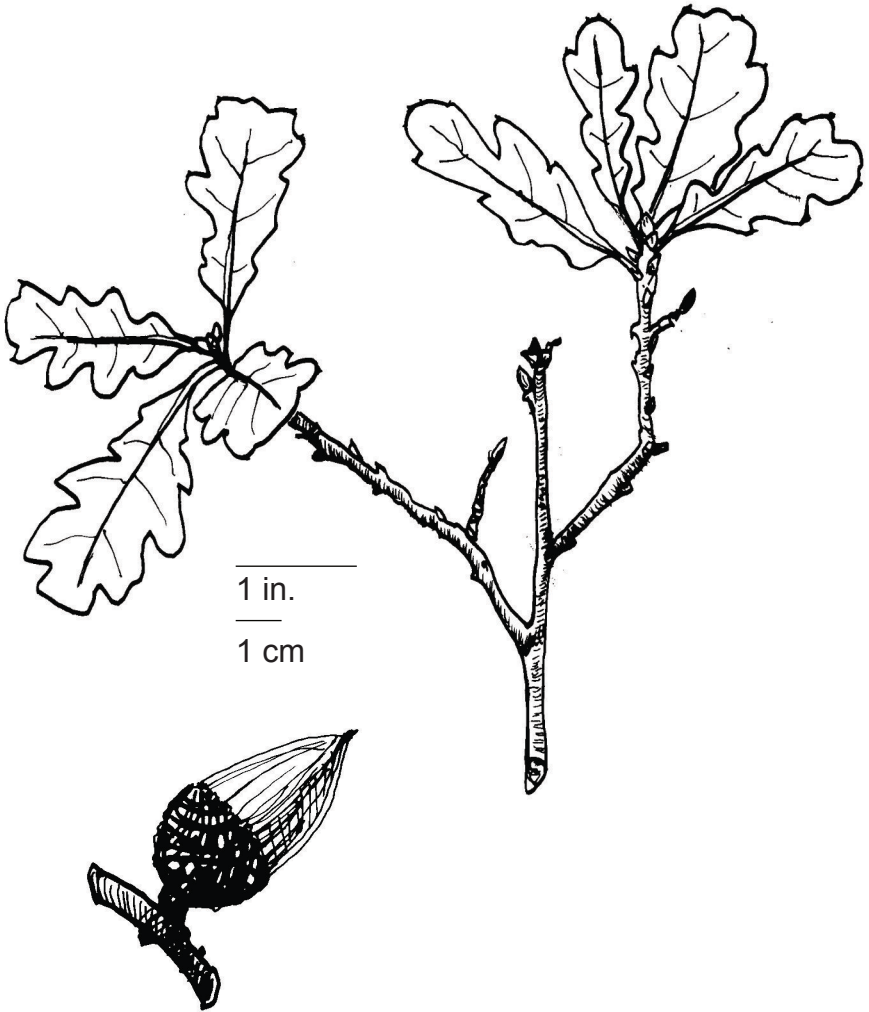


Valley oaks and Coast live oaks more than 11.5 inches in diameter are protected in Palo Alto.



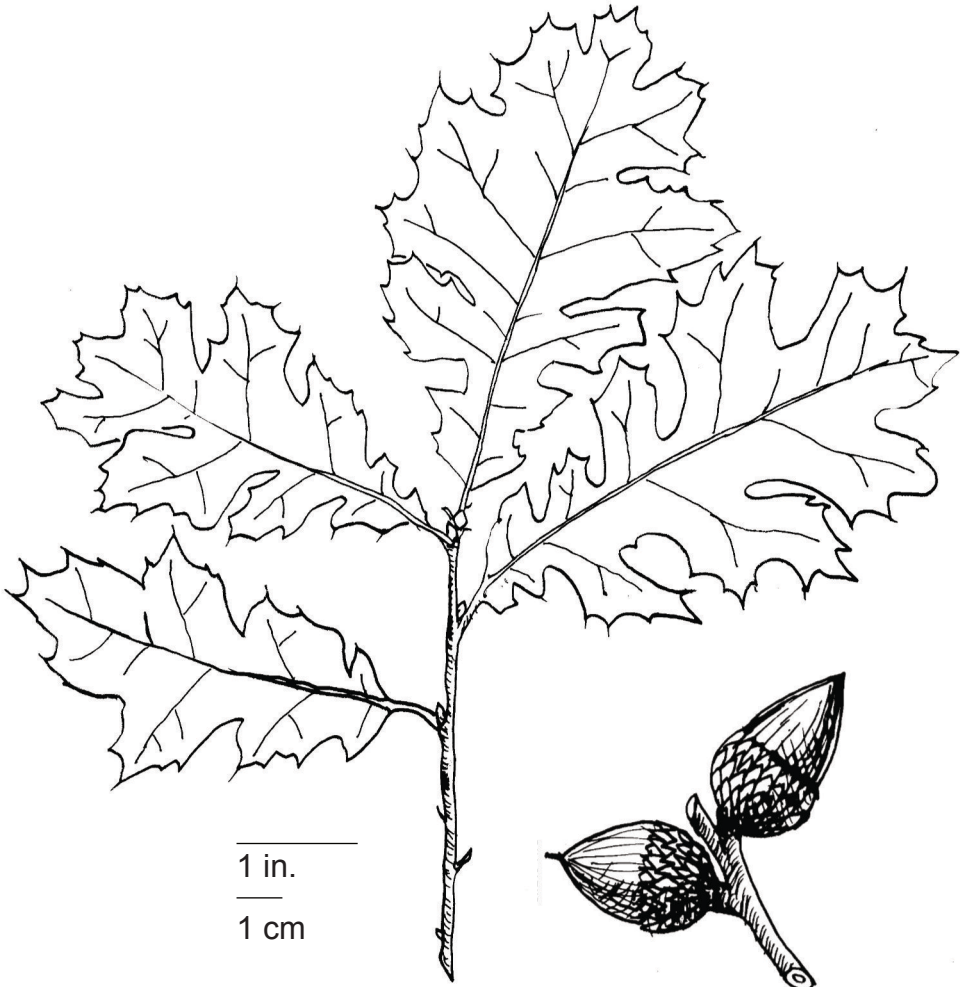
# BLUE OAK

*Quercus douglasii*



# CALIFORNIA BLACK OAK

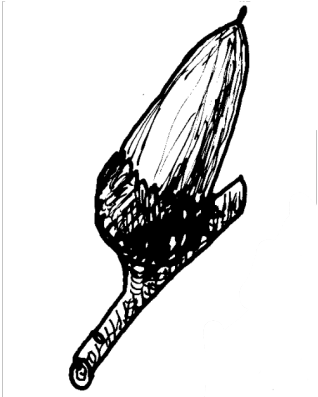
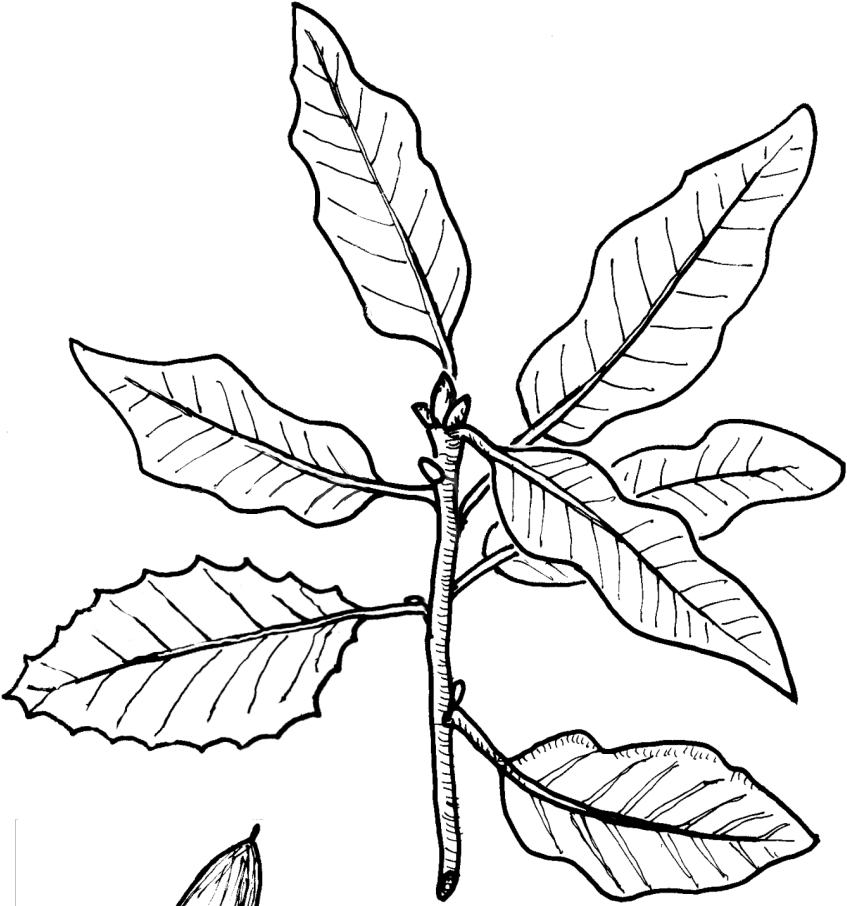
*Quercus kelloggii*





# INTERIOR LIVE OAK

*Quercus wislizeni*



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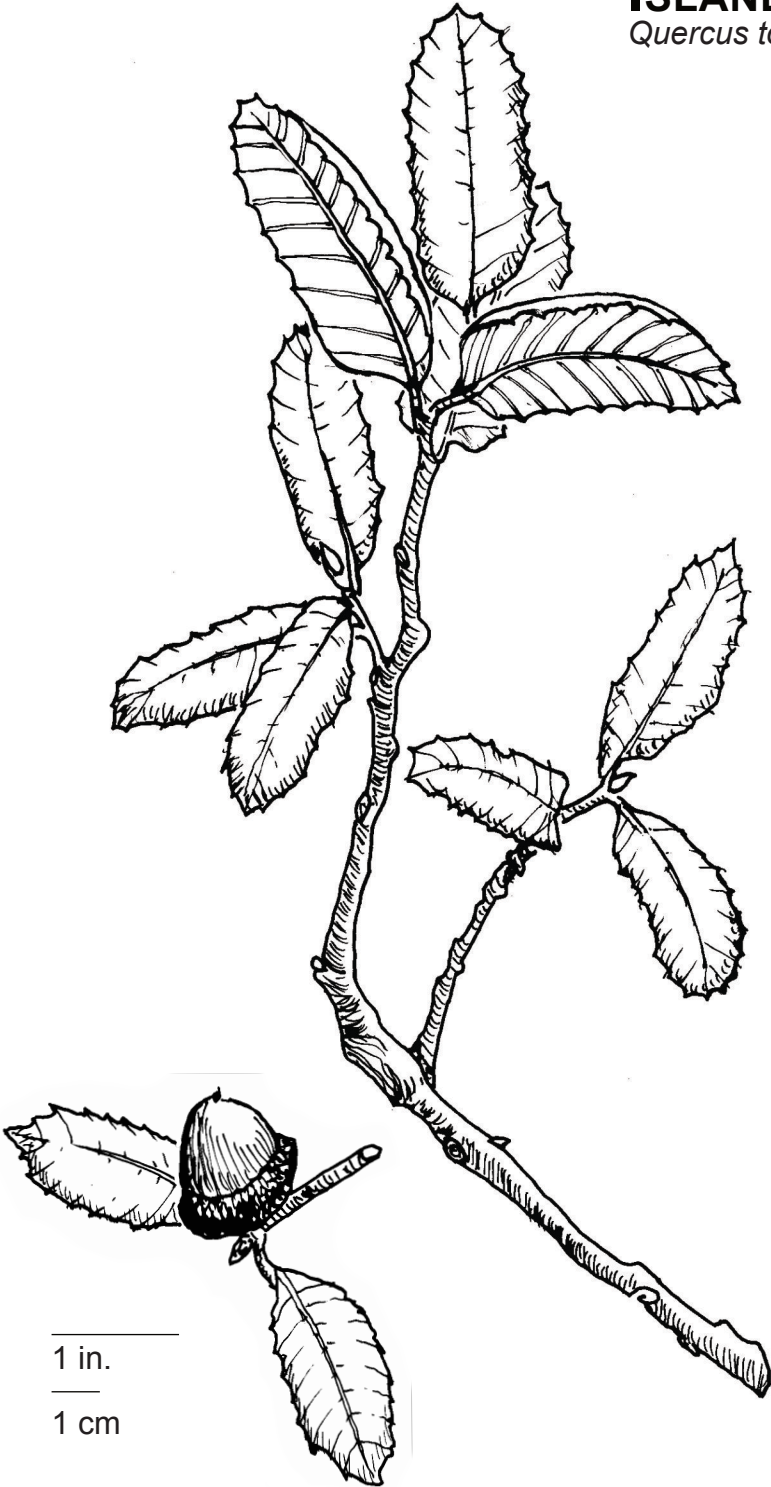
1 in.

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1 cm



**ISLAND OAK**  
*Quercus tomentella*



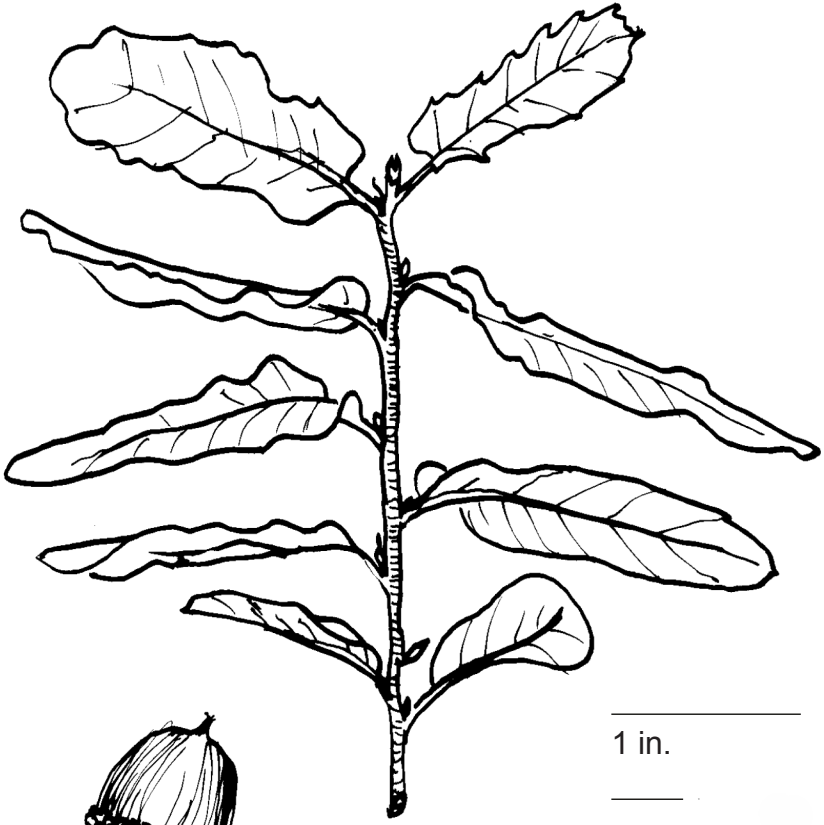
1 in.

1 cm



# ENGELMANN OAK

*Quercus engelmannii*



1 in.

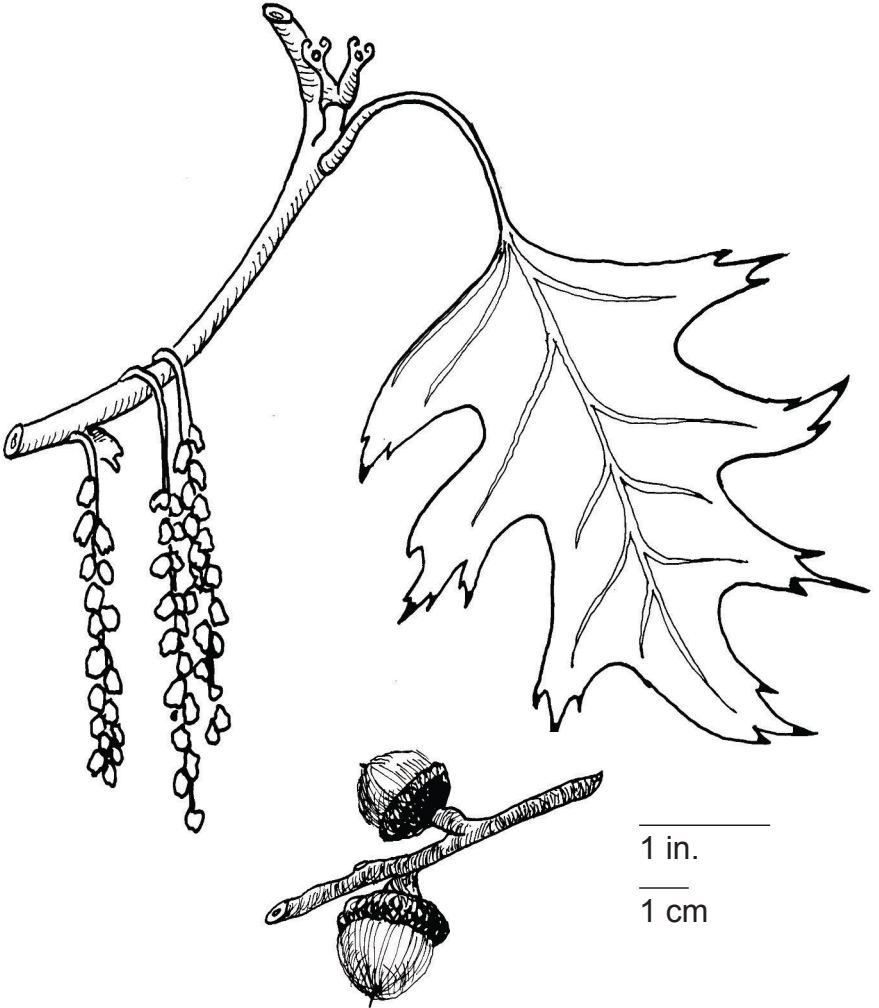
1 cm

**OAKS CULTIVATED  
IN PALO ALTO**



# RED OAK

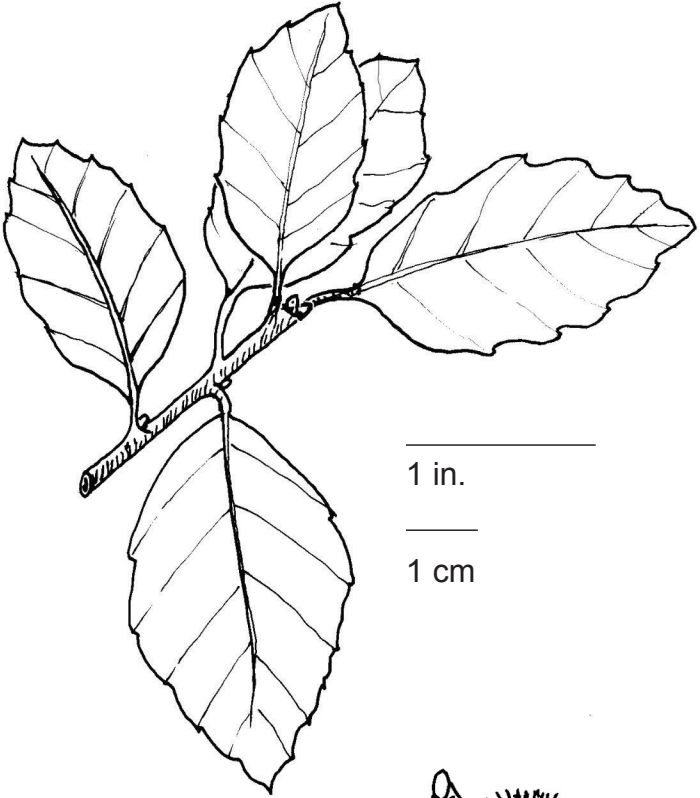
*Quercus rubra*



1 in.

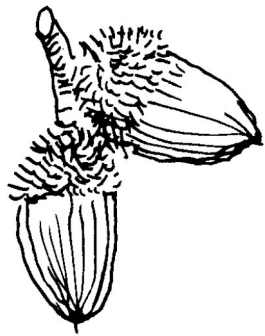
1 cm

**CORK OAK**  
*Quercus suber*



1 in.

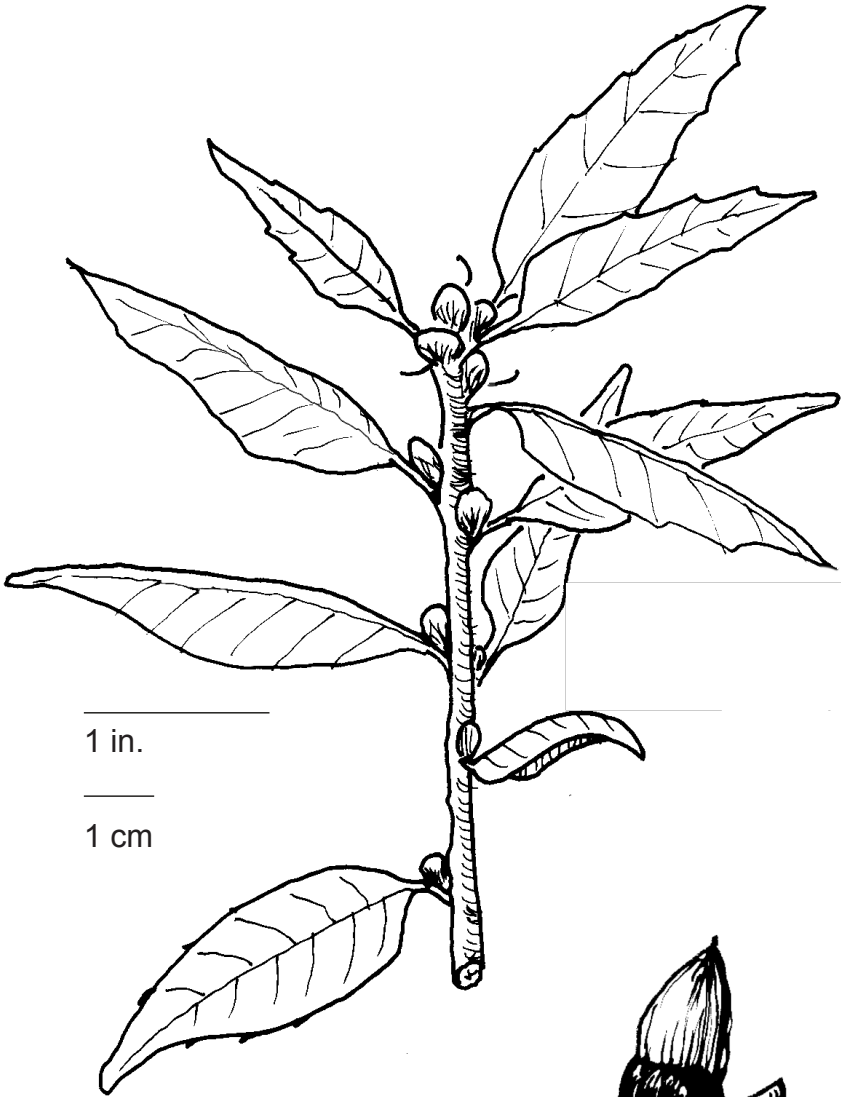
1 cm





# HOLLY OAK

*Quercus ilex*



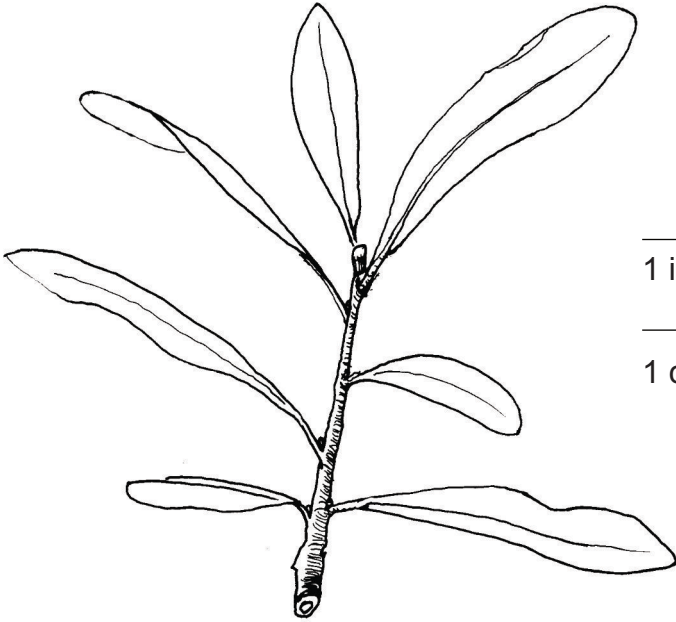
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1 cm



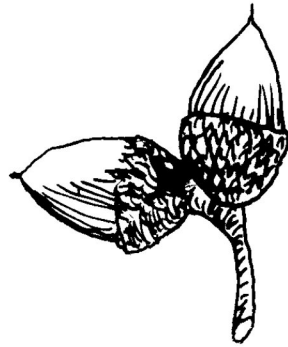
# SOUTHERN LIVE OAK

*Quercus virginiana*



1 in.

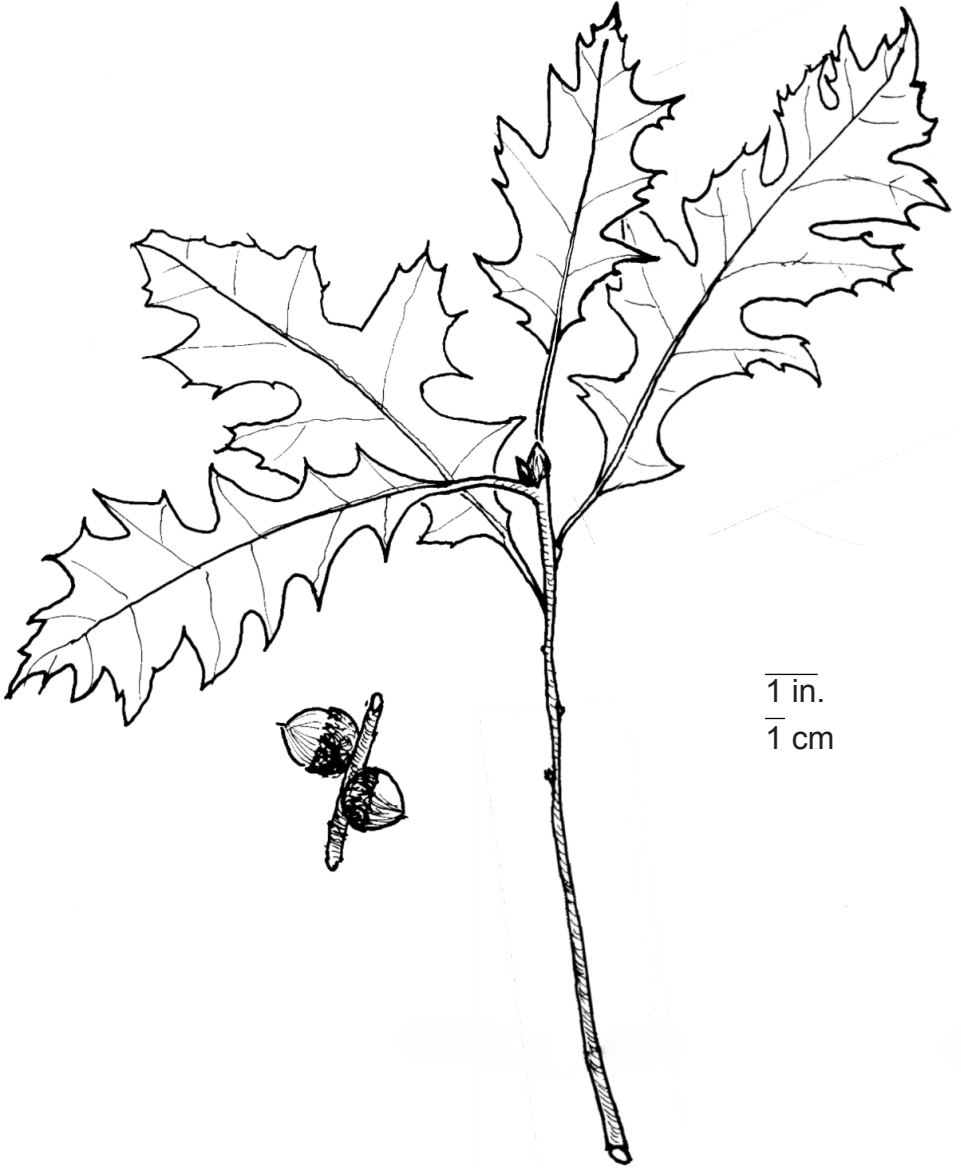
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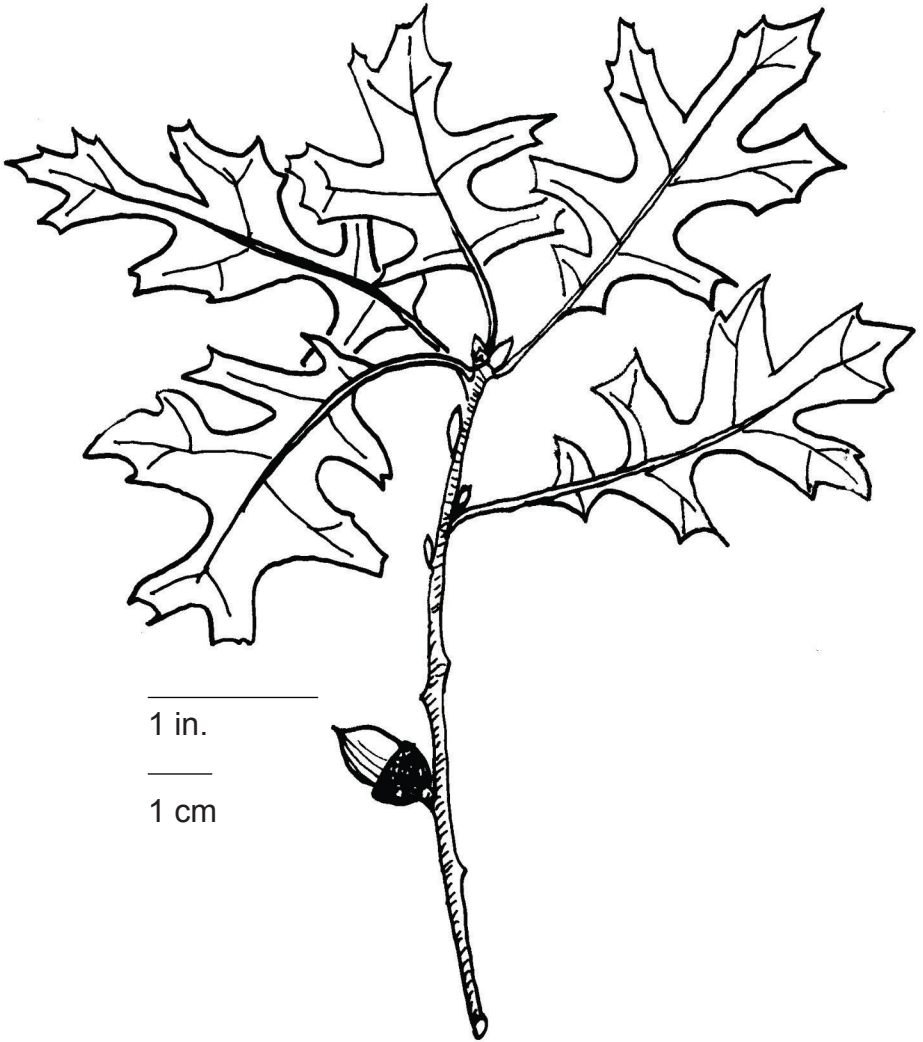
# SHUMARD OAK

*Quercus shumardii*





**TEXAS RED OAK**  
*Quercus buckleyi*



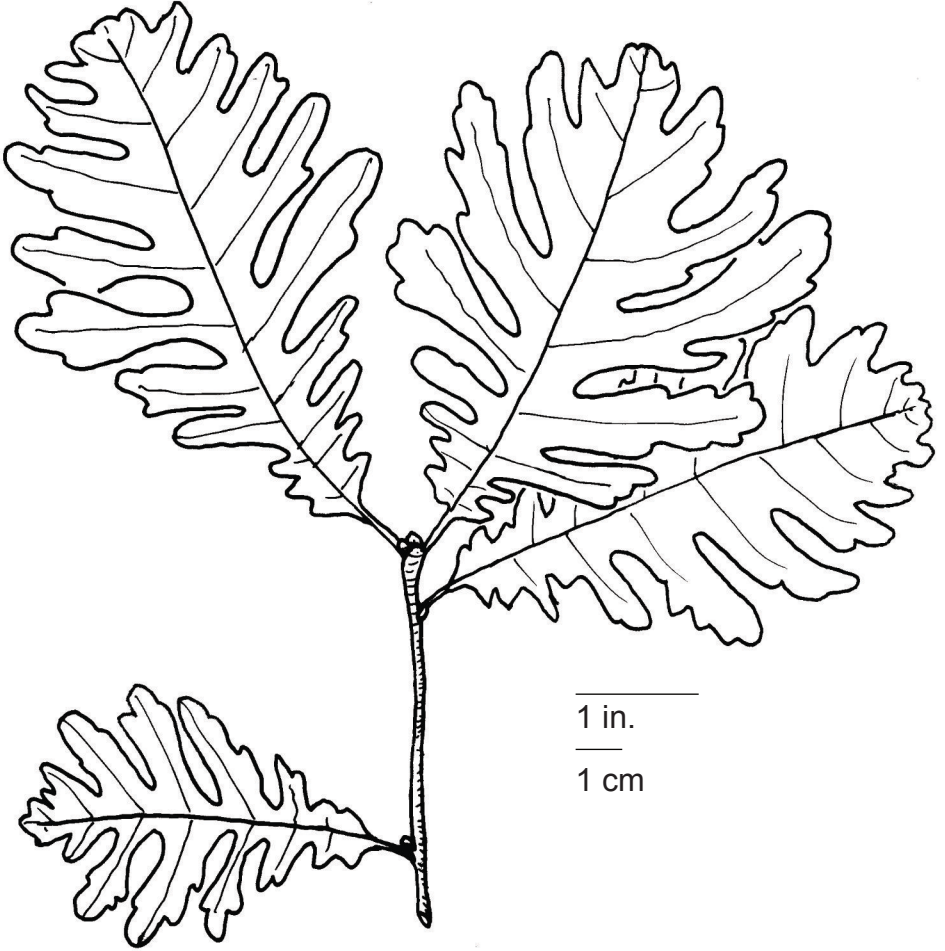
1 in.

1 cm



# FOREST GREEN OAK

*Quercus frainetto*



1 in.

1 cm



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Christine Baker, Palo Alto resident and Canopy volunteer. Lisa Leinbaugh, Evelyn McMillan, Wouter Suverkropp, Katherine, and Sebastian.

# FURTHER READING

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# NOTES:

