The Mustard Seed
Landscaping & Garden Centers

Northern Pin Oak

Quercus ellipsoidalis

Northern Pin Oak
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 50 feet

Sunlight: ○ ◐

Hardiness Zone: 3a

Other Names: Hill's Oak

Description:

An attractive shade tree with a pyramidal-oval habit of growth, pointy leaves and excellent rich red fall color, fast growing for an oak; grows best in loose, slightly acidic soils, but more tolerant of alkaline soils than its popular relative the pin oak

Ornamental Features

Northern Pin Oak has dark green deciduous foliage which emerges brick red in spring on a tree with an oval habit of growth. The spiny lobed leaves turn an outstanding brick red in the fall. However, the fruit can be messy in the landscape and may require occasional clean-up. The furrowed gray bark and silver branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.

Northern Pin Oak in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Northern Pin Oak is a deciduous tree with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This tree will require occasional maintenance and upkeep, and is best pruned in late winter once the threat of extreme cold has passed. It is a good choice for attracting squirrels to your yard. Gardeners should be aware of the following characteristic(s) that may warrant special consideration;

- Messy

Northern Pin Oak is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Shade

Planting & Growing

Northern Pin Oak will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 50 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 6 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live to a ripe old age of 100 years or more; think of this as a heritage tree for future generations!

This tree does best in full sun to partial shade. It prefers to grow in average to moist conditions, and shouldn't be allowed to dry out. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.