Welcome to the Peter J. Shields Oak Grove!

Of the more than 100 species, hybrids, and varieties of oaks that comprise the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden collection, we have highlighted 12 outstanding members of the Quercus genus. From acorn to strong- limbed tree, many of these oaks have resided in Shields Oak Grove since the 1960s!

As you walk under these trees’ expansive canopies, take a moment to learn about their unique history and characteristics by reading the interpretive signage throughout this tour. We hope that by the end of this tour you leave with more oak knowledge than you had before!

This tour is a 0.25 mile loop along gravel trails in Shields Oak Grove and will take approximately 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Restrooms and a water fountain are easily accessible and clearly identified on the map.

Art/Science Fusion

The striking ceramic tree plaques in Shields Oak Grove were created through the UC Davis Art/Science Fusion Program. The program brings together the skills of artists and scientists to create unique works of art that express scientific concepts.

About the Arboretum

The UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden is a living museum composed of the historic Arboretum, the main campus landscapes, and the Putah Creek Riparian Reserve – a rare local ecosystem. Our gardens and outdoor spaces are free and open to the public.

Get Involved

Become a member!

Join the Friends of the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden, the organization that has supported us since 1971. Membership benefits vary and can include plant sale discounts and free entry at museums nationwide. Learn more and become a member on our website.

Join a volunteer team

The arboretum would not be the destination it is today without the support of our volunteers who donate more than 15,000 hours of service each year. Join a gardening team, staff a plant sale, assist with education events, or mentor students. Go to our website and sign up for our newsletter to find out when our next volunteer training is scheduled.

Make a Difference

Support your passion

Share your dedication to the environment by becoming a donor. Your donation becomes a lasting gift to the entire community, and ensures that we continue to thrive as an exceptional place of beauty, learning and environmental stewardship.

Lead the Way

UC Davis students, visit our website to find out more about our Learning by Leading program and view recruitment schedules. We offer paid intern positions and/or course credit.

arboretum.ucdavis.edu
11. Kermes oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus coccifera  
**origin:** Barcelona, Spain  
Kermes oak is a slow-growing evergreen oak that is known for being the host to the kermes insect. This insect is a valuable source of red dye, dating back to the Middle Ages. In fact, the dye was so valuable it was even used as a form of payment for rent!

10. Brandegee oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus brandegeei  
**origin:** Baja California Sur, Mexico  
The rarest oak in Shields Oak Grove, this tree’s native range is limited to the southernmost tip of the Baja California Peninsula in Mexico. Brandegee oak can live for an extraordinary 800 years and mature trees can reach 40 feet in height. The elongated acorns of this species are edible and are said to taste sweet!

9. Cork oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus suber  
**origin:** Barcelona, Spain  
Cork oak bark has a long history of being commercially harvested to produce cork. During World War II, many cork oaks were planted on the UC Davis campus in order to address cork shortages during the war. Today, the cork oaks across campus are celebrated for their unique beauty and large size.

8. Netleaf oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus rugosa  
**origin:** 20 miles from Oaxaca, Mexico  
Found in North and Central America, netleaf oak boasts cupped leaves with woolly undersides and prominent vein structures. Flourishing in high altitudes, this cloud forest tree is part of the impressive range of oak diversity in Mexico. Its warty-capped acorns contain fuschia-colored inner flesh and its leaves and bark are used for making medicine.

7. Engelmann oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus engelmannii  
**origin:** San Diego County, California  
Engelmann oaks are native to a small area in Southern California but are considered rare due to urban development. While it is predicted that the combined pressures of increased fire frequency and climate change could endanger this species, replanting efforts are well underway!

6. Blue oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus douglasii  
**origin:** Along the Yuba River, California  
The blue oak’s acorns have historically been a valuable food source for Native tribes, and continue to be used to create baskets, medicine, and weapons. This oak is considered the “tree of life” for indigenous Californian tribes and is said to paint the foothills of the Central Valley in a palette of blue and green hues.

5. Chisos red oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus griffithii  
**origin:** Big Bend National Park, Texas  
In the fall, Chisos red oak is known for its show of brilliant and glossy burnt-orange leaves, which have been described as painting the hillsides red. Native to Texas, this tree’s acorns were wild-collected in Big Bend National Park. As our climate in Davis becomes hotter and drier, Chisos red oak is a good choice for future city trees.

4. English oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus robur  
**origin:** unknown  
English oak is important to culture and folklore across Western Europe; in fact, it is known as the ‘king of trees’ and stands as a symbol of strength. Its strong, durable timber is often used to make wine barrels and even tan leather.

3. Bur oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus macrocarpa  
**origin:** Texas  
Bur oak is a spreading tree that is best known for growing in the prairies of the Midwest. Here in Shields Oak Grove, this tree has ample space to grow, allowing the unique, twisted shape of its trunk to emerge. Keep an eye out for this tree’s large, mossy acorns, as they are the largest acorns in Shields Oak Grove!

2. Valley oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus lobata  
**origin:** Solano County, California, along the bank of Miller Creek  
The valley oak is the most abundant native oak in Davis and most of the Sacramento Valley. It is known as a keystone species because so many creatures, like gall wasps and scrub jays greatly depend on it for food and shelter. Gall wasps lay eggs in the bark of these oaks, creating round apple-shaped growths called galls. Be on the lookout for galls while on this tour.

1. Persian oak  
**scientific name:** Quercus castaneifolia  
**origin:** Royal Botanic Gardens, London, England  
This oak is one of the largest and fastest growing oaks in the Shields Oak Grove and can be identified by its egg-shaped crown and serrated leaves. Originally from the Caucasus mountains, this oak’s acorns came from a tree growing in London’s Kew Gardens. Persian oak is known to live as long as 1,000 years and develop distinct ridges and fissures along its trunk.

Peter J. Shields Oak Grove Tour

Start Here

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