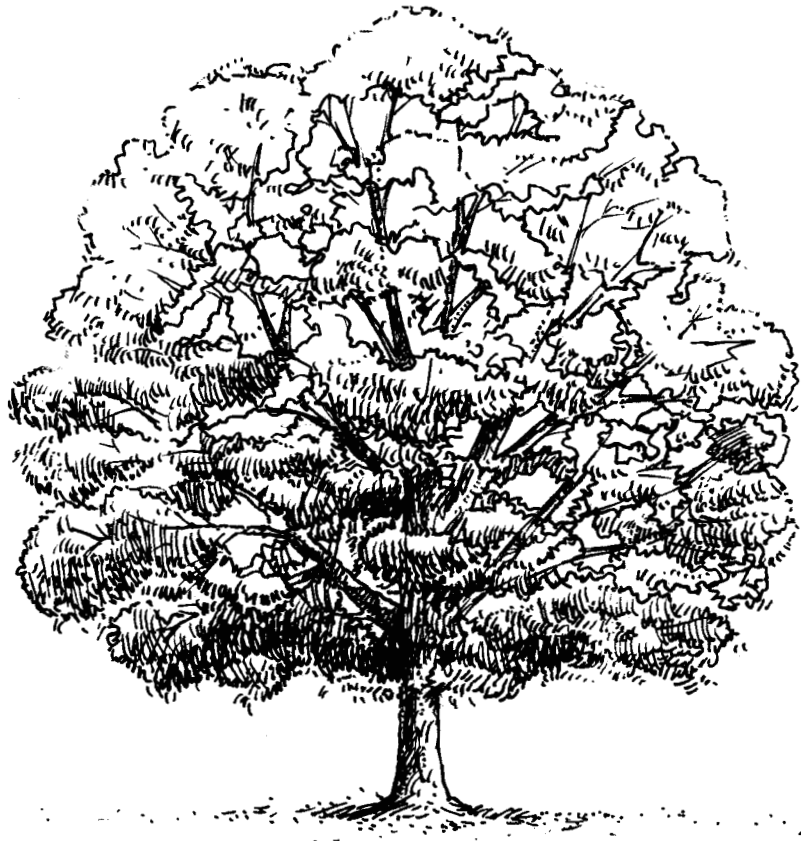


Planting Sawtooth Oak for Wildlife

There is no food more widely used by wildlife than acorns. Many people are interested in producing more acorns on their property but do not want to wait the 25 to 30 years it usually takes native oak trees to start producing acorns. There is a species of oak that begins production much sooner. Sawtooth oak (*Quercus accitimus*) is a tree native to Asia that is widely adapted to the southeast United States. Sawtooth oaks grow fast and routinely produce first crops of acorns in the fifth or sixth growing season. The acorns are large like those from our white oaks and are dropped in September and October in Alabama. Sawtooth oak trees will reach a height of 50 to 70 feet. They are sometimes used as a fast growing ornamental shade tree in yards.

How To Plant

Sawtooth oaks are most often planted as 1-year transplants that are sold either as bare-rooted or containerized seedlings. Plant the seedlings where they can get plenty of light and about 25 feet apart in rows 20- to 25-feet wide. They may get enough light to survive on field edges or interspersed in pine plantings, but they will not produce acorns. One grove of 10 to 25 trees for each 100 acres of land is usually adequate. Sawtooths can be planted like pine seedlings using a dibble bar. Plant seedlings no deeper than they were planted in the nursery. Although they



Mature sawtooth oak.

can grow in most soils, sawtooth oaks do best in sandy loam to clay loam soil at sites that are moderately well drained. Like most hardwoods, sawtooth oaks have thin bark and will not tolerate wildfire or prescribed burning as do thicker-barked pines.

Control Competing Vegetation

Sawtooth oaks do not compete well with weeds, other trees, or deer. To get maximum growth rates eliminate other vegetation within 1 foot around the

seedling. After the first year, control competition around the stem to a distance as wide as the sawtooth oak's canopy. Use a herbicide that will not harm a hardwood tree but is effective on grasses and weeds. Weed mats are very effective as well.

Protect From Deer Browsing

Constant deer browsing where deer numbers are high can keep sawtooth oaks suppressed. In these locations it may be necessary to protect the young tree

with a wire cage made from 2- × 4-inch welded wire. Build cages 1 foot in diameter and 4 feet high, and hold them upright with a 5½-foot-long piece of No. 3 rebar driven into the ground. Tree shelters (plastic, transparent grow tubes) not only protect young trees from deer browsing (and antler rubbing) but also greatly accelerate tree growth. The one draw back of tree shelters is their cost.



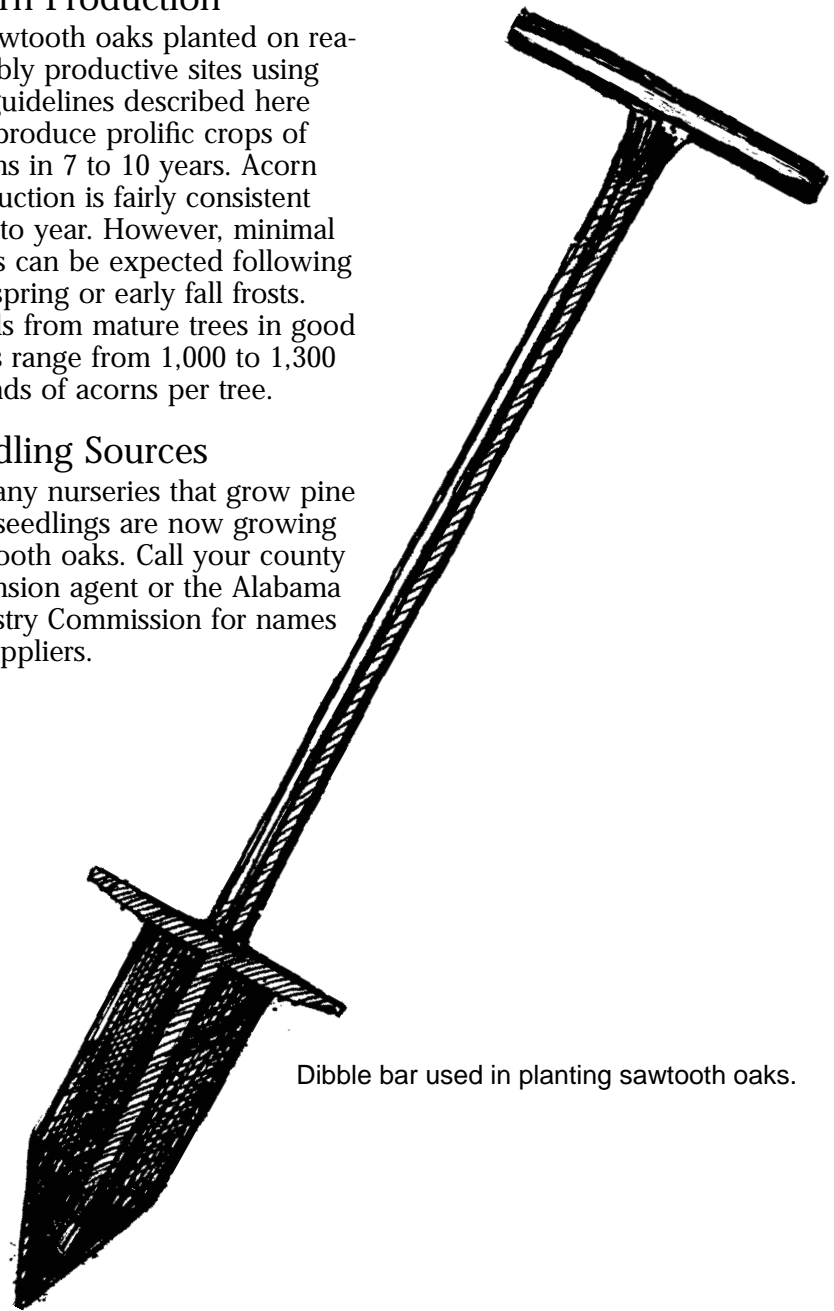
Sawtooth oak leaves and acorns.

Acorn Production

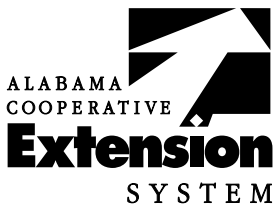
Sawtooth oaks planted on reasonably productive sites using the guidelines described here will produce prolific crops of acorns in 7 to 10 years. Acorn production is fairly consistent year to year. However, minimal crops can be expected following late spring or early fall frosts. Yields from mature trees in good years range from 1,000 to 1,300 pounds of acorns per tree.

Seedling Sources

Many nurseries that grow pine tree seedlings are now growing sawtooth oaks. Call your county Extension agent or the Alabama Forestry Commission for names of suppliers.



Dibble bar used in planting sawtooth oaks.



ANR-851

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For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

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