Identifying Kentucky’s Forest Trees
31. CHINKAPIN OAK
(Quercus muehlenbergii Englem.)

Soil/Site
• prefers dry slopes in shallow soils from limestone origin

Bark
• ashy gray; flaky; shallowly fissured
• broken with irregular, squarish scales

Twigs
• reddish to straw brown; slender; lenticellate
• initially hairy, becoming smooth

Buds
• 3/16” (0.5 cm) long; orange-brown; scales with gray margin
• sharp-pointed; smooth

Flowers
• 3” (7.5 cm) long; male—catkins; female—yellow flower spikes
• early spring

Fruit
• 3/5” (1.5 cm) long; dark brown to black; enclosed 1/3 by woolly cup
• autumn

Value
• acorns for wildlife
• useful timber tree

Leaves
size
• 4” to 6” (10.0 to 15.0 cm) long; 1 1/2” to 3 1/2” (3.8 to 8.8 cm) wide

arrangement
• alternate; simple

margin (edge)
• coarsely serrate (white oak group); each tooth bears a gland at the tip

lobes
• none

shape
• oblong

surface
• bright green, smooth above; pale green, smooth below

coloration
• brown or red (autumn)
32. **NORTHERN RED OAK**  
(Quercus rubra L.)

**Soil/Site**
- best on moist, upland soils with good drainage

**Bark**
- greenish brown, becoming black with age
- wide, flat ridges with deep black furrows (resemble ski tracks)

**Twigs**
- reddish to greenish brown; moderately stout; smooth

**Buds**
- 1/4" (0.6 cm) long; dark reddish brown; shiny
- smooth to slightly pubescent; overlapping scales

**Flowers**
- 4" (10.0 cm) long; male—catkins; female—yellow flower spikes

**Fruit**
- 1" (2.5 cm) long; reddish brown; enclosed in a flat saucer-like cup; shiny
- autumn

**Value**
- acorns for wildlife
- valuable timber and landscape tree

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**Leaves**

**size**
- 5" to 9" (12.5 to 22.5 cm) long; 4" to 5" (10.0 to 12.5 cm) wide

**arrangement**
- alternate; simple

**margin (edge)**
- entire

**lobes**
- 7 to 11 lobes with bristle tips (red oak group) pinnately arranged; sinuses cut 1/2 distance to midrib from edge

**shape**
- lobed (oblone)

**surface**
- shiny green, smooth above; dull green, smooth below

**coloration**
- dark red (autumn)