

Distinguishing Laurel and Live Oaks

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Distinguishing Laurel and Live Oaks

- Laurel Oak = *Quercus laurifolia*
- Live Oak = *Quercus virginiana*
- Both species are native to south Florida

- However, almost all oaks sold and planted in south Florida are live oaks including Cathedral® and Highrise® oaks. Nevertheless, the laurel oak is a fine native tree.

Distinguishing Laurel and Live Oaks



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Trees of the same age. Laurel oak on the left, live oak on the right. Notice the differences in the shapes and densities of the canopies.

The Barks



Left: The bark of the laurel oak is dark grayish to blackish and not as furrowed as the live oak.

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Right: Compared to the laurel oak, the bark of the live oak is darker and deeply divided into narrow furrows but becomes blocky with age.

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The Leaves



The laurel oak has dark green leaves, often undulating and sometimes with a few shallow lobes. Leaves begin falling in the fall replaced by florescent green leaves in the spring.



The live oak has leathery green leaves, with recurved (downward folding) margins; sometimes prickly-toothed, dark green and glossy on the upper side, pale-pubescent beneath. It retains its old leaves until new leaves appear. Thus considered “evergreen.”

The Leaves



Laurel Oak

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Simple, alternate, lanceolate, elliptic to oblong, obovate; 1-¼- to-4" long, ½-to-1-½" wide; petiole, ¼" long; entire or with a few shallow lobes, thick, leathery, often undulating, lustrous dark green above, and lighter green beneath.

The Leaves



Live Oak

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Simple, alternate, elliptic-obovate; 1- $\frac{1}{4}$ -to-3" (5") long, $\frac{3}{8}$ -to-2- $\frac{1}{2}$ " wide; petiole, $\frac{1}{4}$ " long; entire or spiny, recurved margins, leathery, lustrous dark green above, and pubescent, gray-green beneath.

The Leaves



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Left: The leaf of the laurel oak is light green beneath. **Right:** The leaf of the live oak is pubescent, gray-green beneath

The Acorns

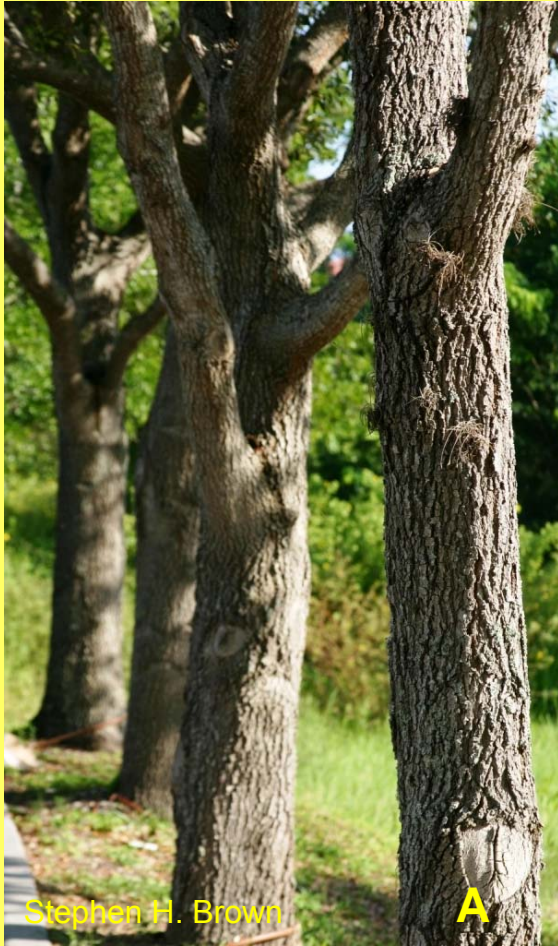


The acorns on the laurel oaks are nearly round, about $\frac{1}{2}$ " long, covered $\frac{1}{3}$ -to- $\frac{1}{2}$ by the cap, and borne singly or paired on short stalks (virtually sessile).



Acorns on live oaks are produced irregularly in the fall; copiously some years, scantily or none at other times. They are about $\frac{1}{3}$ covered by the cap and often borne in clusters of 2 to 5.

Which is Which?

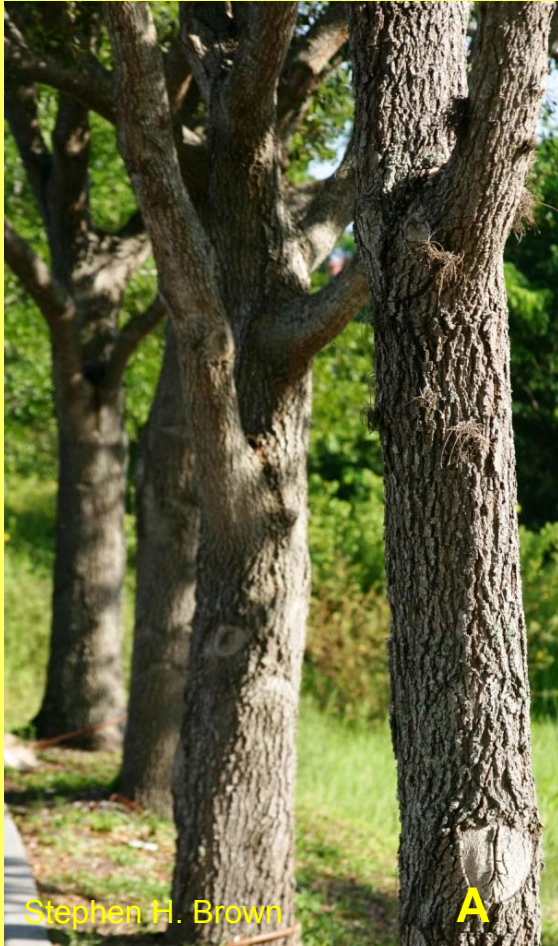


Which is Which?



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Which is Which?



Live Oaks



Laurel Oaks

Which is Which?



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