



BEAR OAK *Quercus ilicifolia* Wangenh.



Bear or scrub oak is a small, thick-
et-forming, shrubby tree usually
less than 20 feet high. It is common on
the sand barrens of southern Maine,
extending into Oxford County where
it is common on the barrens surround-
ing the Saco River near Fryeburg. It
also occurs in eastern Hancock County,
and on rocky ridges and barren ledge
sites along the coast.

The **bark** is smooth, gray-brown,
and has a few raised lenticels. On larg-
er trees the bark may become rough
and scaly.

*Bear oak wood is occasionally used as fuel, but is
generally not considered to be of commercial value.*





The **leaves** are the primary distinguishing feature. They have 5–9 bristle-tipped lobes, are whitened on the underside, alternate and 2–4 inches long. The second set of lobes from the base tends to be much larger than others.

Male **flowers** are pale reddish-green catkins that appear in May when the leaves are only partially grown. The **fruit** is a dark brown acorn $\frac{2}{5}$ – $\frac{4}{5}$ inch long that matures in the fall of the second season.

The **twigs** are slender and densely hairy during the first year. The terminal buds are clustered, chestnut brown and blunt-pointed. The lateral buds are of similar size to the terminal.

The **wood** is occasionally used as fuel, but is generally not considered to be of commercial value.

Bear oak twigs are finer than the other native oaks and covered with hairs.

