

# America's National Tree: The Mighty Oak

*By Kim Peacock | July 4, 2021*

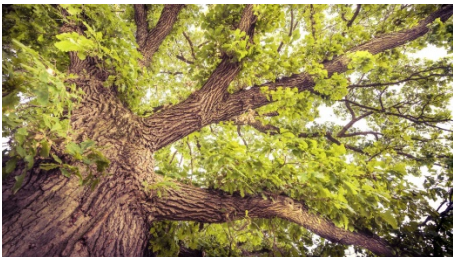


In 2004, the National Tree bill was passed through congress and the mighty Oak became [America's National Tree](#)! There are more than 60 species growing natively throughout the U.S. and can be found shading our backyards, lining our neighborhood streets, and standing tall in our parks. It provides food and habitat for wildlife and has also served as a backdrop for some of our country's most historic moments.

Being July, a special month for a special country, let's take a moment to celebrate the many oaks that have held our treehouses, cooled our summer picnics, and commemorated so much throughout the generations.

Some of my favorite oaks:

## Bur Oak



The bur oak is a mighty tree. A coarsely textured crown, plenty of acorns, and a massive trunk make this an impressive tree indeed. The bark is deeply furrowed and distinctive. It has a range across much of the US and thrives in many climates..

In pioneer days on the plains, it came to the rescue of unfortunate travelers who needed new wagon tongues, wheel hubs, or spokes. Sioux City, Iowa, is the location of the Council Oak, so named because Lewis and Clark held council with the Native Americans under its branches.

## Chinkapin Oak



With its strong branches and interesting leaves, the chinkapin oak is unique and unusual. Early pioneers used its wood to make thousands of miles of fences in the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. Later-on, the trees were used to fuel the steamships that ran from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. They were also used as railroad ties for the new railroads that crisscrossed the Midwest.

## Live Oak



Often seen magnificently draped in Spanish moss, the live oak is the iconic tree of the South. It has been called one of the most impressive North American trees and can live to be hundreds of years old.

Its exceptionally strong wood was used in early navy vessels, including the famous USS Constitution. Today it is a tree appreciated by arborists and city foresters for its wind firmness, adaptability to various soil types, and tolerance to soil compaction and salt spray.

## White Oak



“If oak is the king of trees, as tradition has it, then the white oak, throughout its range, is the king of kings,” said Donald Peattie. This beauty can be found presiding over pastures, shading parks and neighborhoods, and thriving in natural stands throughout the eastern U.S. In World War II, white oak served our country as the keels of mine sweepers and patrol boats.