48. *Quercus velutina* Lam.  
Black Oak

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The largest known Black Oak in Michigan is located in Algonac in St. Clair County in the southeastern portion of Michigan’s Lower Peninsula.

*Description of the species:* Black Oaks belong to the Red Oak group (subgenus *Erythrobalanus*). They therefore have leaves that are thick and leathery with bristle-tipped lobes. The sinuses between the lobes are generally shallow and broad but extend halfway or more to the midrib (Fig. 1). The winter buds are sharply angled and tomentose. The acorns are sessile or short stalked with deep bowl-shaped cups which cover 1/3 to 1/2 of the nut. The scales of the cup are thin and loose fitting, forming a slight fringe. The inner bark of this species is thick, bitter tasting, and bright yellow or orange. This is a highly variable species which is known to form hybrids with Red Oak, Scarlet Oak, and Shingle Oak (Voss, 1985).

*Location of Michigan’s Big Tree:* The State Champion Black Oak is located in the courtyard of an elementary school at Washington and Clay Streets in Algonac, MI. To reach the tree, take State Route 29 south from Port Huron past Marine City and Algonac State Park. Turn right on Smith Street and go two blocks to the school. The coordinates for this location are 42° 37.240′ N, 82° 31.923′ W.

*Description of Michigan’s Big Tree:* The tree has a single, solid, healthy trunk with several large burls. Several branches exhibit tip dieback. According to the school principal, Mr. Terry Wallis, several large branches had to be cut back when they threatened the school roof. It is a testament to the pride the area takes in this tree that they built the school around it! I measured the girth of the trunk at 256” on 3 September 2003. The height was 120′ and the average crown spread 80′. The total points for this tree (G+H+ 1/4 × crown spread) is, therefore, 256 + 120 + 1/4 × 80 = 396.

**INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE**

If you would like to join in extending this series of articles by visiting and describing one or more of Michigan’s Big Trees, please contact Elwood B. Ehrle, woodyehrle5098@sbcglobal.net, for help with locations, specifications for taking measurements, and assistance with the manuscript. The Michigan Botanical...
Club encourages your involvement with this activity. Please remember to ask permission before entering private property.

LITERATURE CITED
