



Red oak leaf

Black oak leaf

### Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*)

Red oaks may be recognized by its bark which features ridges that appear to have shiny stripes down the center. Leaves are dark green, shiny and have 5-7 lobes with U-shaped notches. Leaves turn red in the autumn. The acorn cap has reddish brown scales and covers only the base, appearing too small for the nut.

Red oaks are vulnerable to wilt disease which was first discovered in New York in Glenville in 2008. This is a very serious fungal disease that can kill red oaks within weeks of infestation.



Red oak acorn



Black oak acorn

### Black Oak (*Quercus velutina*)

Black oaks are distinguishable by trunks with bark broken up with horizontal divisions which result in a square pattern. Leaves have 5-7 bristle-tipped lobes separated by deep U-shaped notches. The upper surface is shiny deep green; lower is yellowish-brown with hairs along the midrib. Leaves turn brick red or yellow in the autumn. The cap of the acorn covers almost half the nut.

Black oaks are normally found in forested areas and not commonly used for landscaping or tree lawns.



Red oak bark

Black oak bark

### More Brochures About Trees in The Realty Plot

Our first two brochures, "Notable Trees of the Realty Plot" and "Mature Street Trees of the Realty Plot," can be found on the Realty Plot website. The first brochure describes some of our important and noteworthy trees, and the second one identifies the trees that were planted in the street lawn soon after our houses were built.

## Heritage Trees Of the Realty Plot



This brochure is the third of a series that we have developed to help readers learn more about the urban forest found in our neighborhood. In this brochure, we help you to recognize and identify the trees that were growing here long before the Realty Plot was developed and now tower over our houses providing an important visual balance and ambiance to the neighborhood.

### The Realty Plot Tree Committee

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The Realty Plot Tree Committee is an *ad hoc* group of Realty Plot residents with a common interest in the trees that comprise the urban forest that is a distinguishing characteristic of this neighborhood. If you would like to join the Committee in this work, contact Ben Wiles at [ben.wiles.home@gmail.com](mailto:ben.wiles.home@gmail.com).

## Our Trees Prior to 1899

The major tree species that were growing here prior to the development of the Realty Plot include the oaks (red, white and black) and white pine. These species are all native to eastern North America. Several oak species and white pine often grow together in forests of the Northeast, with the pine becoming the taller species. All of these trees can live for hundreds of years.

The pin oaks that line Adams Road are not part of this type of natural ecosystem and are rarely found in the wild. Pin oaks are used more as landscaping and street trees because they are easy to transplant, grow quickly and are tolerant to pollution. The pin oak is discussed in the brochure on mature street trees of the Realty Plot.

The land on which the Realty Plot, originally known as College Woods, was developed was owned by Union College until it was sold to the General Electric Company in 1899. Photos from that period show a mix of wooded and open areas comprising the 75 acres of land. One can assume that some of the trees in the wooded areas had to be cut down to accommodate the construction of roads and houses. The view of Lowell Road on an old post card photo (see front of this brochure) shows that many trees were obviously saved from that fate. It appears that many of the trees that were saved at that time, however, are no longer around.

## Tree Identification

Identification of black oaks and red oaks is complicated. First because our trees are so tall it is often difficult to obtain a leaf or acorn directly from the tree you are trying to identify. The shape of the leaves is highly variable even on the same tree. Further, red and black oaks are known to hybridize producing subspecies with a mix of characteristics. As an aid to identifying the tree species included in this brochure, the important distinguishing characteristics highlighted in red.



*Needles and cone of white pine*

### Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

Virgin white pines forests once covered much of northeastern North America. This species has the distinction of being the tallest tree in eastern North America. It can be easily identified by its needles that occur in **bundles of five**. The cones, which hang near the ends of branches, are slender, 3 – 6 inches long, and have scales that are slightly flexed and usually white-tipped.

## White Oak (*Quercus alba*)

This is the most common oak found in the yards of the Realty Plot. You can also find a large one in the street lawn on Lowell near the Ravine. It is called white oak because of the pale gray bark and white wood. The leaves are easily distinguishable from our other oaks with rounded spaces between **rounded lobes**. Leaves turn purplish red in the autumn. The acorns become light brown and shiny. The knobby caps often drop off at maturity.



*White oak leaf*



*White oak acorn*