

Feature Tree – 2009  
Chinkapin oak

Chinkapin oak, *Quercus muehlenbergii* (Fagaceae family)

**Habit:** Deciduous shade tree with a pyramidal growth pattern as a young tree, becoming more rounded as the tree matures. With enough room on an optimal growing site it can grow to a height of 60 feet and a spread of 60 feet at maturity.

**Hardiness:** Zone 4 to 6

**Leaves:** Deep forest green and lustrous upper leaf surface with a white and slightly fuzzy lower surface. Leaf margins are coarsely toothed.

**Twigs:** Young branches are smooth and light brown.

**Bark:** The main trunk is gray in color with a somewhat flaky habit.

**Flowers:** Male and female flowers found on the same tree and are not very showy.

**Fruit:** Elliptical shaped acorn up to one inch long with the cap covering a third to a half of the fruit. The acorn is sweet and relished by wildlife.

**Landscape Value:** This is a full sun tree that is somewhat tolerant of alkaline soils and there are only a handful of oaks that will tolerate Colorado's clay alkaline soils. The closest this tree grows naturally to Colorado is eastern Kansas. This is a rare oak for the Colorado landscape that is now being planted more and more. The state champion Chinkapin oak is in Denver with a diameter over 30 inches and a height of 60 feet.

**Diseases/Insects:** No major pest problems observed on this tree.

**Special Note:** The Chinkapin oak was selected as the 2009 Urban Tree of the Year by the Society of Municipal Arborists (SMA). The SMA is a national organization of over 1,300 municipal arborists and urban foresters.

**Information Sources:**

*Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*, Michael A. Dirr

