Oak
*Quercus* spp.

There are 41 different species of oaks at the Arnold Arboretum.
Two major categories of oaks are
the white oak group and the red oak group.

White oak leaves
have rounded lobes.

Red oak leaves
have pointed lobes.

Unusual acorn
Bur oak acorns
have fringed caps
covering the nut.

Gray squirrels eat acorns.
Nuts about Oaks

Most oak trees begin to produce acorns around their 20th year. Production starts slowly, then speeds up until about the 100th year, after which acorn production slows down again until it reaches a yearly yield of about 2,000 acorns each fall. There are natural variations in acorn yields from year to year.

*How many acorns are produced at the Arboretum each year? Let’s assume...*

- 2,000 acorns produced each fall
- \( \times 107 \) number of 100-year-old oak trees at the Arboretum

Answer = acorns produced each year by these trees

Acorn nuts are eaten by deer, raccoons, turkey, mice, bears, squirrels, wood ducks, and even humans. In the wild, the chances of one acorn taking root are very slim—it is estimated that only 1 in 10,000 acorns might become a tree.

Big Tree

The Arboretum’s largest oak tree is a Sargent Oak (Quercus \( \times \) sargentii), with a trunk diameter of 4.6 feet which is more than 14 feet in circumference. The tree was grown from seed collected in 1877, and named for the first director of the Arnold Arboretum, Charles Sprague Sargent. To find the tree: start at the ponds, walk up Beech Path, and look on the left for a tree with dark, furrowed bark.

Letterboxing

Letterboxing is a fun way to explore the oaks at the Arboretum. For more information on letterboxing go to www.letterboxing.org.

*To find the September letterbox: walk up Meadow Road past Bussey Hill Road. After that intersection, look for the Oak Path sign on your left. Follow Oak Path until you find a large oak tree on the left side of the path with a huge burl. The letterbox is hidden behind the trunk of this tree. Follow the directions inside and kindly leave everything as you found it.*