

houses - live Oaks -

THE ARNOLD ARBORETUM
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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Jamaica Plain 30, Mass. USA

Jan 31, 1947

Professor J. T. Baldwin, Jr.
College of William and Mary,
Williamsburg, Virginia,

Dear Professor Baldwin:

The package with material of the oak referred to in your letter of Jan 26th has been passed on to me for examination and I have just gone over the specimens.

Your surmise as to it being a hybrid between the live oak and a deciduous species is certainly correct, and I think there can be no doubt that the other parent is the overcup oak (*Quercus lyrata* Walt.)

This hybrid has an interesting history, and we have a lot of material of it in our herbarium. Early in this century Professor Helge Ness began experiments in the artificial cross-pollination of oaks at the experiment station of the Texas A. & M. College, and one of his most successful crosses was that between *Quercus virginiana* and *Q. lyrata*. He published an account of his work in *Jour. Heredity* 9: 263- 268. 1918. A second paper by him appeared in the same journal, 18: 381 - 386. 1927. Dr. S. H. Yarnall in 1933 had a paper on further results obtained at the experiment station with subsequent generations of this and other Ness hybrids in *Jour. Arnold Arb.* 14: 68 - 75. 1933.

When I was at College Station about 1819 Professor Ness had two fine specimens of this hybrid growing on the campus which had made remarkably rapid growth and had produced a few acorns. From these he grew a second generation. W. S. Flory, Jr. and F. R. Brison published a bulletin on the subject (*Tex. Agric. Exper. Sta. Bull.* 612), in 1942.

But it is interesting too that this same hybrid has turned up growing spontaneously, but in most cases apparently planted though without record of its origin, in several places in the southern states. Miss M. E. Compton found a number of specimens growing about old plantations near Natchez, Miss., and sent material to Professor Sargent, and in 1918 he described it as *Quercus Comptonae* (*Bot. Gaz.* 65: 456 - 457). It has also been found growing in a part at New Orleans and at Selma, Ala. and in Matagorda Co., Tex.

As is to be expected in hybrids, and as shown in the publications to which I have referred, there is a wide range of variations in leaf and other characters both in the spontaneous and cultivated plants- especially in the F_2 and F_3 or subsequent generations. We have some specimens that almost exactly match your material both in foliage and fruit.

Your note says that the tree from which your material came was supposedly transplanted from near Virginia Beach, by J. B. Brouwers, gardener for Colonial Williamsburg. And I wonder whether it would be possible to learn from him or from someone else connected with the project where they originally obtained the

stock. For while some publicity has been given to the Ness hybrid in the scientific publications mentioned, I do not know of its having been placed on the market commercially, and this is the first time that I have heard of it from your part of the country.

Thank you for the fine lot of material which we are glad to add to our herbarium as an additional record.

Sincerely yours,

s/ Ernest J. Palmer
t/ Ernest J. Palmer