

**MARTY MORGAN, COOKE COUNTY AG AGENT
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE-**



The Dream Tree

The last several years we have been plagued with lots of problems from the trees in our pastures to those in our yards. In Cooke County the trees are predominantly Oaks with the majority of them being Post Oak, Red Oak or Live Oak. We do have several other types of native trees including the ever present Elm trees like the American Elm, Cedar Elm Chinese Elm etc... These types of trees have been stressed with periods of wet and dry weather which has caused many types of funguses, root rots, cankers, and other diseases to affect the health of our trees. In our yards we have many different types of trees and mainly for these reasons-- to provide shade, to make our landscapes look pretty and to improve the value of our property. Our yard trees have endured stress and health issues as well and while losing a tree out in the pasture is not good, losing one in our yard is disheartening. We all love the trees around our house and we will try to do almost anything to keep them alive and healthy.

If you have lost trees around your home and thinking about replacing them this fall or next spring, let me introduce you to what many nursery's and landscapers are calling "The Dream Tree". We all know that fast-growing trees tend to be "trash trees" — plants that for any number of reasons aren't particularly desirable to have in your landscape, but this tree is an exception to that rule. This tall treasure is a medium sized tree that grows to 40 feet and it gets there quickly, with a growth rate of as much as 4 feet per year. The trunk can grow to be two feet in diameter and the average lifespan is about 100 years. The leaves of this tree are four to five inches long with smooth or serrated edges of varying degrees and it holds onto its leaves until late winter or early spring when it defoliates, followed by a rapid re-leafing period. All in all it is leafless for just 2 to 8 weeks, depending on the climate in which it is planted. This hardy species, as many Texas gardeners can attest, is extremely drought-tolerant. Even in July and August when temperatures regularly hit triple digits they don't require supplemental watering. It prefers neutral to alkaline soil pH, and can adapt to many soil types including sandy loam and well-drained clay soils. It is typically a very healthy tree that is resistant to most pest and diseases that plague many other trees, and this species can generally handle the rare case of powdery mildew that may occur, all on its own. They don't need much pruning or thinning other than pruning the lower limbs to raise the canopy to a desired height, and they aren't plagued by deadwood the way live oak and other trees can be. Assuming they are planted in proper soil and receive occasional rain, these green giants require no additional care.

Ok I know you're ready to know what this fast-growing, semi-evergreen, adaptable, disease-resistant, low maintenance tree is, right? Well it is called the "Mexican White Oak" Never heard of Mexican White Oak or its aliases, Monterrey Oak and Netleaf White Oak? Don't feel bad, you are not alone.