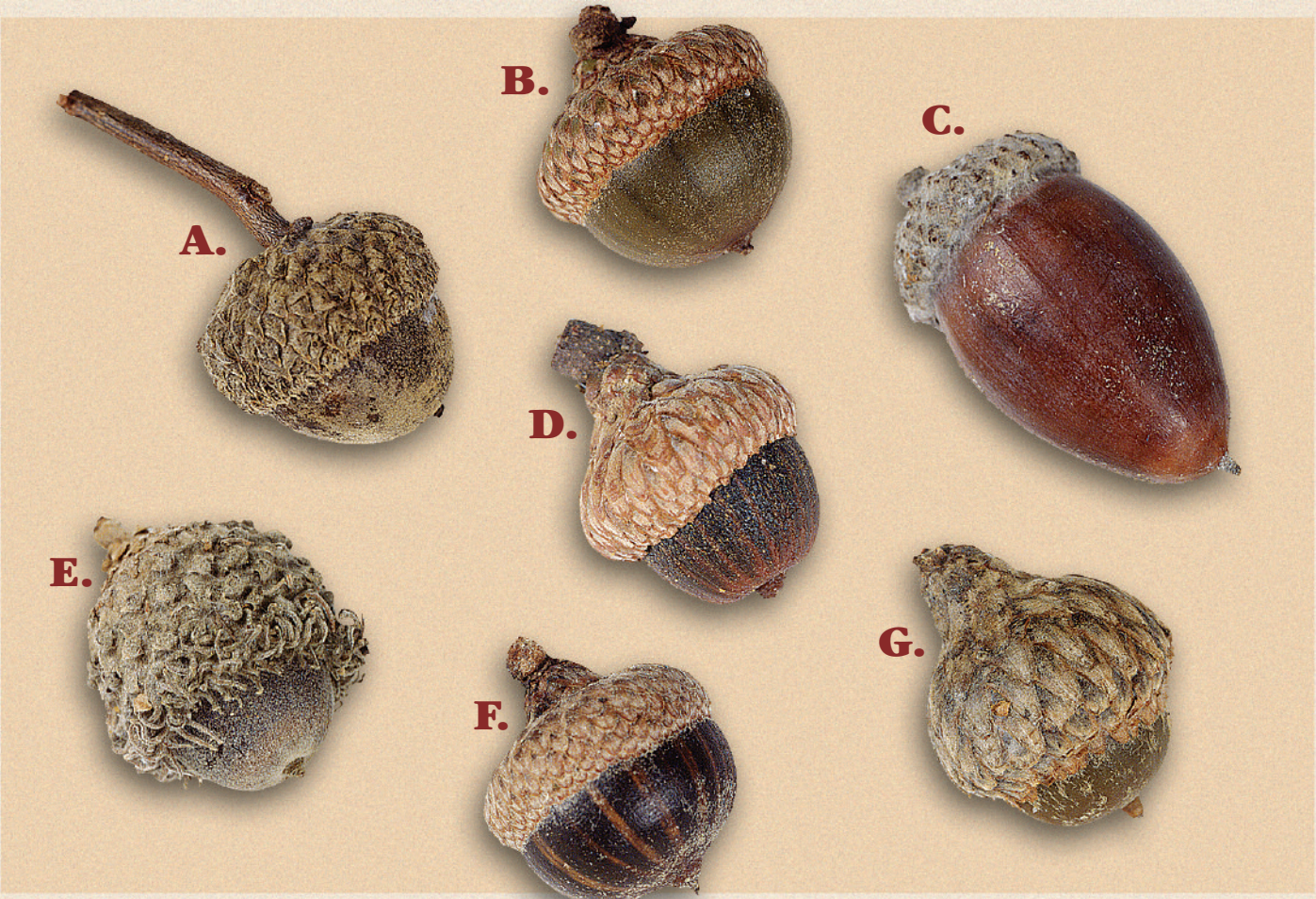
Nuts to You



Most people can readily recognize several species of oaks by the shape and other features of the leaf. Identification is more difficult in the winter, but using the overall shape of the tree, color and texture of the bark and characteristics of the acorn as clues, you can identify members of the *Quercus* genus. How many species can you identify by these descriptions?

_____ **1.** The dark-brown **shingle oak** acorns are nearly spherical and on a short stalk. Less than half of the seed is enclosed in the red-brown, slightly hairy cup.

_____ **2. Northern red oaks** have pale-brown acorns and the tightly scaled, red-brown cup covers less than a fourth of the seed.

_____ **3. Pin oak** acorns are pale-brown, small and may have dark lines. The thin, saucer-shaped, red-brown acorn cup has fine hairs, and it encloses less than a fourth of the nut.

_____ **4.** The most distinguishing feature of a **bur oak** acorn is that the bottom rim of the cup is hairy, the cup has a fringe of long scales and it covers half to nearly the entire nut.

_____ **5.** The oblong acorns of the **white oak** are green to green-brown and shiny. The cup is warty, yellow-brown and covers a fourth of the seed.

_____ **6.** A ragged edge circles the cup of the red-brown acorns of the **black oak**. No more than half the acorn is enclosed by the cup.

_____ **7.** Acorns of the **swamp white oak** grow on a stem which usually remains attached on the cup of the nut even after it has fallen from the tree. The thick, hairy cup encloses a third of the pale-brown nut.

Submit your answers on "Outdoor Illinois magazine" at facebook.com by 5 p.m. Dec. 17, 2009 for a chance to win a free 1-year subscription/renewal to *Outdoor*Illinois. Answers will be posted on Facebook and at dnr.state.il.us/OI on Dec. 18.