

Acer platanoides -Norway Maple (*Aceraceae*)

Acer platanoides is a stress tolerant tree widely planted along streets and residential landscapes. It casts a dense shade and is available in purple-foliaged or uniquely shaped forms.

Form

-large shade tree



deep, well-drained, moist soils; but tolerates urban stress conditions

-susceptible to several diseases (including Verticillium wilt and anthracnose) and pests, but especially prone to frost cracks (bark splitting and sap oozing on the south side of the trunk in winter)

-abundantly available, with many cultivars

Foliage

-opposite

arrangement, with either dark green, deep purple, bronze, or variegated leaves (depending upon cultivar)

-5-lobed; the basal 2 lobes smaller than the upper 3, with all 5 lobes incised but not serrated

-palmate venation, with blades about 6" long x 6" wide and larger than Sugar Maple

-the blade tends to remain flat and even (in contrast with Sugar Maple which tends to curve down)

-petioles exude a milky sap when broken off

-autumn color is often yellowish-green and unattractive, but is occasionally a rich golden yellow

Flowers

-globular inflorescences that emerge in Apr. (before the foliage) are yellow-green and give the otherwise barren tree a bright lime-colored appearance; very attractive

Fruits

-2 samaras (each 2" long) per stalk, with widely divergent (almost 180 degrees) prominent wings

-samaras occur in pendulous clusters, maturing as brown fruits in Oct.

Twigs

-stout and brown; with green or purple, large-scaled, prominent buds in winter, depending upon cultivar

-much stouter and less twiggy than other Maples, with much larger buds

Trunk

-light brown to light gray branches, with light gray trunks

FEATURES

-maturing to 50' tall x 50' wide

-upright oval growth habit in youth, becoming rounded and spreading with age

-medium growth rate

Culture

-full sun to partial sun (partial shade tolerant in youth)

-prefers cool, moist summers in



-bark lightly fissured in youth, becoming shallowly interlaced with ridges with age, but not deeply fissured nor platy as is typical of other large Maples with age

USAGE

Function

-shade tree for the green-foliaged forms; focal point or specimen tree if it is purple-foliaged or variegated

Texture

-medium-bold texture in foliage and when bare

-thick density in foliage and average density when bare

Assets

-dense summer shade

-purple-foliaged and variegated cultivars

-most urban tolerant of the shade Maples for the Eastern and Midwestern U.S.

-fairly symmetrical branching

Liabilities

-shallow root system surfaces with age

-prone to frost cracks on south-facing bark in winter

-does not perform well under humid conditions of the Southern U.S.

-deep shade beneath mature trees inhibits turf

-usually has poor autumn color

-somewhat prone to Verticillium wilt or anthracnose diseases

-self-sows, displacing native trees when allowed to grow; becoming weedy and invasive in some areas

Habitat

-Zones 3 to 7

-Native to Northern Europe (but naturalized wherever it is allowed to self-sow)

SELECTIONS

Alternates

-urban tolerant street trees (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*, *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis*)

-broadleaf shade trees with non-green summer foliage (*Acer negundo* 'Fleming', *Fagus sylvatica* 'Riversii', 'Purpurea Pendula', and 'Tricolor', etc.)

Cultivars – Variants – Related species

-*Acer platanoides* 'Crimson King' - brilliant red-purple emerging foliage, slowly changing to deep purple and maintaining this color (i.e., not fading to bronze or dark green as with most other cultivars) throughout the summer, but turning to an unattractive purple-brown in autumn; maturing at 45' x 45', but with a slower growth rate than the green-foliaged forms

-*Acer platanoides* 'Emerald Queen' - the most common cultivar among the green-foliaged forms, growing a little more rapidly than the species form, with an oval-rounded growth habit at maturity; to 50' x 40', heat and drought tolerant, with yellow autumn color

'Crimson King'

'Columnare'

'Globosum'

