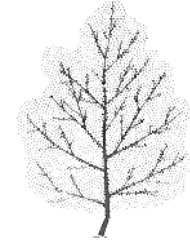


Ginkgo biloba - Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree (*Ginkgoaceae*)

Ginkgo biloba is a large, bold-textured, urban tolerant shade tree whose female form produces foul-smelling fruit.

Form

-large shade tree



FEATURES

-the species form usually matures at about 80' tall x 60' wide under urban conditions, but specimen trees in open areas can get much, much larger
-an upright columnar, sparsely branched, and open growth habit in youth, usually becoming an upright oval to upright spreading growth habit with maturity, but sometimes becoming highly

irregular and picturesque in its branching with age

-medium growth rate

Culture

-full sun to partial sun

-prefers moist, deep, sandy soils in full sun, but is very adaptable to stressful situations, including poor soils, compacted soils, various soil pHs, heat, drought, winter salt spray, and air pollution (and is therefore very urban tolerant)

-propagated primarily by cuttings from male cultivars grafted onto seedling rootstock, but also by seed (gender may not be known for twenty years)

-virtually free of disease and pest problems

-moderate availability in B&B form

Foliage

-medium green and unusually obovate (fan-shaped), up to 3" long, with a petiole that is also up to 3" long; this shape and the elongated petiole cause the foliage to flutter in the slightest breeze

-alternate along the terminal stems, but clustered on the numerous short spur shoots
-the leaf blade apex is sometimes entire, but often

has a single vertical slit in the top center (hence the specific epithet *biloba*); rarely, 2 slits occur, yielding 3 lobes

-veins are slightly raised (giving a ribbed appearance to the foliage) and usually dichotomous (forked)

-autumn color is usually yellowish green, but may be and excellent golden-yellow in good years, or yearly with certain cultivars selected for dependable autumn color

Flowers

-dioecious (male and female flowers are borne on separate trees, with cultivars selected for male fruitlessness)

-pendulous catkins on male trees pollinate the pendulous pistillate flowers on 2" peduncles on female trees in Mar. and Apr.

-species may not flower until about 20 yrs. old

Fruits

-on female trees, the tan-orange oval fruits are pendulous from the spur shoots, often produced in great abundance and becoming a mushy mess in Sept. and Oct., covering the ground with fleshy, strongly

malodorous fruits

-for this reason, male clones grafted onto seedling understock are preferred as landscape trees

Twigs

-stout, with many short spur shoots occurring along the older stems and branches

-stems are tan, light brown, or gray, becoming thready on second-year stems

-the relatively smooth tan branches are somewhat reflective in the winter sun

Trunk

-the light brown to brownish-gray bark is deeply furrowed and highly ridged with age

-the tree usually loses its central leader and gives rise to several vertical trunks that keep ascending to great heights

-trunk may get up to 3' or more in diameter with age

USAGE

Function

-shade, specimen, or focal point tree

-sometimes incorrectly used as a street tree due to its extreme urban tolerance, but much too big (even in stunted and columnar cultivar form) for this usage

Texture

-bold texture in foliage and when bare

-open to thick density in foliage and when bare, due to the widely-spaced main branches and the density of mature trees vs. the openness of saplings

Assets

-long-lived shade tree, often maturing at a very large size

-very urban tolerant

-bold texture, with a growth habit of great character leaves flutter in the slightest breeze

-autumn color on selected cultivars is a clear solid yellow

Liabilities

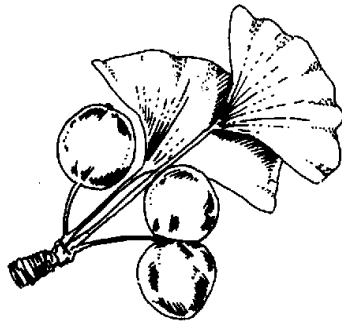
-female trees have copious fruits that are quite messy and possess a foul smell (similar to vomit)

-with age, growth can become irregular or get out-of-hand in restricted areas, including its very large, tall, and spreading habit with maturity, plus the tendency of some trees to have branches crossing the trunk; definitely not a shade tree for the small urban yard

Habitat

-Zones 3 to 8

-Native to China



SELECTIONS

Alternates

-large, urban tolerant shade trees (*Corylus colurna*, *Gleditsia triacanthos* var. *inermis*, *Platanus x acerifolia*, *Populus deltoides*, *Quercus rubra*, etc.)

Cultivars – Variants – Related species

-cultivars are always selected for non-fruiting character (male trees); thereafter, for better autumn color and/or modified growth habit

-*G. biloba* 'Autumn Gold' - more dependable golden-yellow autumn color, with a broadly pyramidal growth habit at maturity; male, with more compact form, maturing at about 50' x 30'

-*G. biloba* 'Princeton Sentry' - nearly columnar form, being slightly wider at the base, used architecturally for a vertical accent; male, about 70' x 10'

Note: *G. biloba* is one of the oldest trees still living on Earth; it is a deciduous gymnosperm.

