

# *Acer griseum* - Paperbark Maple (*Aceraceae*)

*Acer griseum* is a small tree valued primarily for its ornamental coppery exfoliating bark. Paperbark Maple is slow to grow and mature, but a long-term investment in the landscape. It's an excellent small tree!

## FEATURES

### Form



- small ornamental tree or shade tree
- maturing at about 20' tall x 15' wide
- upright oval growth habit in youth, becoming upright rounded with age
- slow growth rate
- significant variability in branching

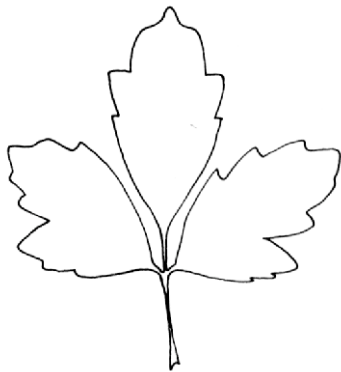
pattern can occur among the seed-derived plants; no 2 plants are exactly alike

### Culture

- full sun to partial shade
- quite adaptable to a wide range of soils, soil pHs, heat, and drought
- few diseases or pests affect this species
- moderately available (propagation is rather difficult), either in B&B or container form, and somewhat expensive, due to its slow growth rate

### Foliage

- opposite and compound, 3-lobed (trifoliate) leaves are up to 6" long, with a medium green, gray-green, or blue-green color
- the 3 leaflets are each up to 2" long, having crenate to dentate margins with distinctly pubescent lower surfaces and petiole
- variable autumn color ranges from yellowish-green to yellow, or bronzed to reddish; in good years, the autumn color can be spectacular.



### Flowers

- pendulous green inflorescences in May are noticeable, but not especially ornamental



### Fruits

- 2 semi-divergent, (45 degree angle) winged samaras per stalk, in pendulous clusters from the twigs; often quite pubescent

### Twigs

- brown-red, pubescent, becoming very exfoliating and more lightly colored on young branches

### Trunk

- copper, cinnamon, or orange trunk usually branches a few feet above the ground, creating an upright multi-branched effect
- bark is exfoliating in youth, either becoming smooth or remaining exfoliating with age; very noticeable and attractive in winter, especially if contrasted with a snowy or solid green background on sunny days

## USAGE

### Function

- specimen, focal point, large foundation, or entranceway small tree

### Texture

- fine texture in foliage; medium texture when bare
- average to thick density in foliage and when bare

### Assets

- exfoliating coppery bark is highly ornamental
- autumn color can be vivid red
- relatively small mature height and width

### Liabilities

- slow growth rate
- marginally hardy in zone 5, especially in exposed areas

### Habitat

- Zones 5 to 8
- Native to Central China

## SELECTIONS

### Alternates

- trees with ornamental bark (*Betula nigra* Heritage® ['Cully'], *Betula papyrifera*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Ostrya virginiana*, *Ulmus parvifolia*, *Zelkova serrata*, etc.)

- trees with a relatively low mature height (*Acer campestre*, *Carpinus caroliniana*, *Koelreuteria paniculata*, *Malus*, *Ostrya virginiana*, etc.)

### Cultivars - Variants - Related species

- Much variability exists within the species for bark quality (ranging from dull brown to bright orange, and from exfoliating to smooth), cold hardiness, and vigor, but none of these variants have been introduced as cultivars into the nursery trade.