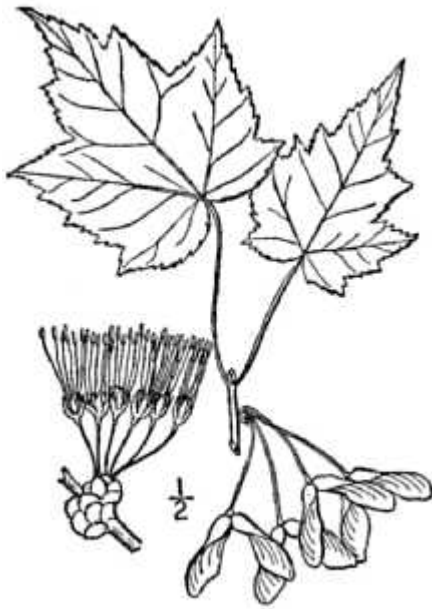


RED MAPLE

Acer rubrum L.

Plant Symbol = ACRU

Contributed By: USDA NRCS National Plant Data Center & the Biota of North America Program



Britton & Brown. 1913
 Illustrated flora of the northern states and Canada
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Alternate common names

Carolina red maple, Drummond red maple, scarlet maple, soft maple, swamp maple, water maple

Uses

Red maple has long been valued as an ornamental tree (shade, specimen, autumn accent, or wet site) because of its ease of establishment, rapid growth, brightly colored flowers and fruit, and fall leaf colors (ranging from clear yellow to orange to vivid red) displaying coloring during different seasons of the year. This tree is preferred over silver maple or boxelder when a fast growing maple is needed. Red maple can be planted onto many types of disturbed sites in rehabilitation projects.

The white, fine-grained wood is used for furniture, flooring, cabinetry, paneling, veneer, musical instruments, tool handles, cutting boards, butcher blocks, wooden bowls, boxes and crates, and many other uses. Red maple is an excellent wood for fuel and is also used for saw timber and pulpwood. But because of susceptibility to defects and disease and poor form of individuals of sprout-clump origin, the timber is often low in quality.

The sap of red maple is sometimes used for producing maple syrup. Although its sap has only about half the sugar content as sugar maple (*A. saccharum*), the syrup tastes good. Saponins in the sap may cause excessive frothing of the concentrate.

Native Americans used red maple bark as an analgesic, wash for inflamed eyes and cataracts, and as a remedy for hives and muscular aches. Tea brewed from the inner bark has been used for treating coughs and diarrhea. Pioneers made cinnamon-brown and black dyes from a bark extract. Iron sulphate was added to the tannin from red maple bark to make ink.

Because of the abundance and wide distribution red maple, its early-produced pollen may be important to the biology of bees and other pollen-dependent insects. Most references describe red maple as wind pollinated, but insect pollination may be important, as many insects, especially bees, visit the flowers. The seeds, buds and flowers are eaten by various wildlife species. Squirrels and chipmunks store the seeds. White-tailed deer, moose, elk browse red maple, and rabbits, which find the stump sprouts especially palatable, especially in fall and winter. Cavities in red maples in river floodplain communities are often well suited for cavity nesters such as the wood duck and others.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status, such as, state noxious status and wetland indicator values. This species has been introduced in many areas of the U.S., outside of its native range.

Description

General: Maple Family (Aceraceae). A native tree growing to 20 m tall, usually with a narrow compact

