

Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*)

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Summary:

Foliage: Deciduous broadleaf

Height: 60 feet

Spread: 60 feet

Shape: Oval to round

Red maple is a fast-growing medium/large shade tree species with a spectacular fall foliage color. It has showy red flowers in the spring. There are many cultivars of this species that vary in form, tolerance of wet conditions, and fall color.

Plant Needs:

Zone: 3 to 10

Light: Partial shade to full sun

Moisture: Wet, moist, or dry

Soil Type: Sandy, loam, or clay

pH Range: 3.7 to 7.0

Functions:

Suggested uses for this plant include shade, street tree, specimen plant, and naturalizing.

Planting Notes:

Tolerates wide range of soils, except those with a very high pH.

Care:

Prune dead and/or damaged wood any time of year.

Problems:

Red maple is somewhat subject to storm damage.

Iron chlorosis (an iron deficiency) is a frequent problem in soils with a high pH.

Surface roots in lawn areas can make mowing difficult.

Alternatives:

Consult local garden centers, historic or public gardens and arboreta regarding cultivars and related species that grow well in your area.

Cultivars of *Acer rubrum*:

Red Sunset® has excellent red to orange fall color and round shape.

October Glory® has a round shape, red fall color, and tends to retain its leaves until later in the fall.

'Autumn Flame' has an early display of red fall color and a round shape.

There are many cultivars of this species that vary in form, tolerance of wet conditions, and fall color.

Silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) is a large fast-growing species that is not suited to most landscapes since it is prone to several pests and is relatively weak wooded. It has a fair fall foliage color at best. This species is suitable for waterside plantings since it tolerates wet soils but one must recognize its shortcomings.

Comments:

Red maple has a profusion of small, red flowers in early spring. This species' fast-growing nature, flower and fall foliage color display make it a desirable landscape species especially for someone who does not want to wait a long time to have a medium sized tree. One should investigate the characteristics of available cultivars before purchasing a plant.

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