**INTRODUCTION**

Ginkgo is practically pest-free, resistant to storm damage, and casts light to moderate shade (Fig. 1). Young trees are often very open but they fill in to form a denser canopy. It makes a durable street tree where there is enough overhead space to accommodate the large size. The shape is often irregular with a large branch or two seemingly forming its own tree on the trunk. But this does not detract from its usefulness as a city tree unless the tree will be growing in a restricted overhead space. If this is the case, select from the narrow upright cultivars such as ‘Princeton Sentry’ and ‘Fairmont’. Ginkgo tolerates most soil, including compacted, and alkaline, and grows slowly to 75 feet or more tall. The tree is easily transplanted and has a vivid yellow fall color which is second to none in brilliance, even in the south. However, leaves fall quickly and the fall color show is short.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** *Ginkgo biloba*
**Pronunciation:** GINK-go bye-LOE-buh
**Common name(s):** Maidenhair Tree, Ginkgo
**Family:** Ginkgoaceae
**USDA hardiness zones:** 3 through 8A (Fig. 2)
**Origin:** not native to North America
**Uses:** Bonsai; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree; tree has been successfully grown in urban areas where air pollution, poor drainage, compacted soil, and/or drought are common
**Availability:** generally available in many areas within its hardiness range

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-273, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 50 to 75 feet  
**Spread:** 50 to 60 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** irregular outline or silhouette  
**Crown shape:** round; pyramidal  
**Crown density:** open  
**Growth rate:** slow  
**Texture:** medium

**Foliage**

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** lobed  
**Leaf shape:** fan-shaped  
**Leaf venation:** parallel; palmate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**Fall characteristic:** showy

**Flower**

**Flower color:** green  
**Flower characteristics:** pleasant fragrance; inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

**Fruit**

**Fruit shape:** oval; round  
**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches  
**Fruit covering:** fleshy  
**Fruit color:** green; yellow  
**Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter

**Trunk and Branches**

**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current year twig color:** brown; gray
USE AND MANAGEMENT

Female plants are wider-spreading than the males. Only male plants should be used as the female produces foul smelling fruit in late autumn. The only way to select a male plant is to purchase a named cultivar including ‘Autumn Gold’, ‘Fastigiata’, ‘Princeton Sentry’, and ‘Lakeview’ because there is no reliable way to select a male plant from a seedling until it fruits. It could take as long as 20 years or more for Ginkgo to fruit.

Ginkgo may grow extremely slow for several years after planting, but will then pick up and grow at a moderate rate, particularly if it receives an adequate supply of water and some fertilizer. But do not overwater or plant in a poorly-drained area. Be sure to keep turf several feet away from the trunk to help trees become established. Very tolerant of urban soils and pollution, Ginkgo could be used more in USDA hardiness zone 7 but is not recommended in central and southern Texas or Oklahoma due to summer heat. Adapted for use as a street tree, even in confined soil spaces. Some early pruning to form one central leader is essential.

There are several cultivars: ‘Autumn Gold’ - male, fruitless, bright gold fall color and rapid growth rate; ‘Fairmont’ - male, fruitless, upright, oval to pyramidal form; ‘Fastigiata’ - male, fruitless, upright growth; ‘Laciniata’ - leaf margins deeply divided; ‘Lakeview’ - male, fruitless, compact broad conical form; ‘Mayfield’ - male, upright fastigate (columnar) growth; ‘Pendula’ - pendent branches; ‘Princeton Sentry’ - male, fruitless, fastigate, narrow conical crown for restricted overhead spaces, popular, 65 feet tall, available in some nurseries; ‘Santa Cruz’ - umbrella-shaped, ‘Variegata’ - variegated leaves.

Propagation is by seed or grafting males.

PESTS AND DISEASES

This tree is pest-free and considered resistant to gypsy moth.

Current year twig thickness: medium; thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Ozone sensitivity: tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree