



Platanus orientalis Oriental Planetree¹

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INTRODUCTION

This deciduous tree is one of the parents of the popular London Planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and has more deeply lobed leaves than its offspring (Fig. 1). Leaves are almost maple-like. Capable of reaching 80 feet in height, the Oriental Planetree has very strong branches and is quite useful as a shade tree. The wood is so tough, dense and hard it is often used for butcher's blocks and furniture. The springtime flowers are followed by fruits which are found on stalks in groups of three to 6. The attractive bark is cream colored and flaky and very striking in the winter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Platanus orientalis*

Pronunciation: PLAT-uh-nus or-ee-en-TAY-liss

Common name(s): Oriental Planetree

Family: *Platanaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: shade tree; no proven urban tolerance

Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 70 to 80 feet

Spread: 50 to 70 feet

Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

Crown shape: round; pyramidal

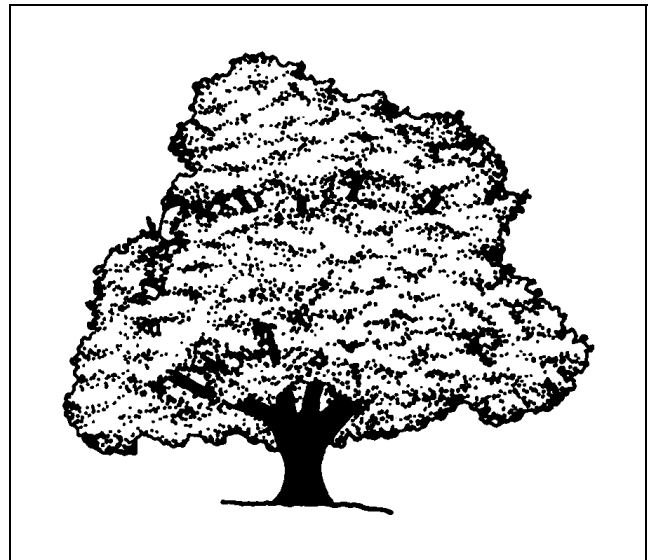


Figure 1. Mature Oriental Planetree.

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: coarse

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed; incised

Leaf shape: ovate; star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: round

Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown; tan

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; persistent on the tree; showy

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

Current year twig thickness: medium

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

Other

Roots: surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing

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: sensitive or moderately tolerant

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

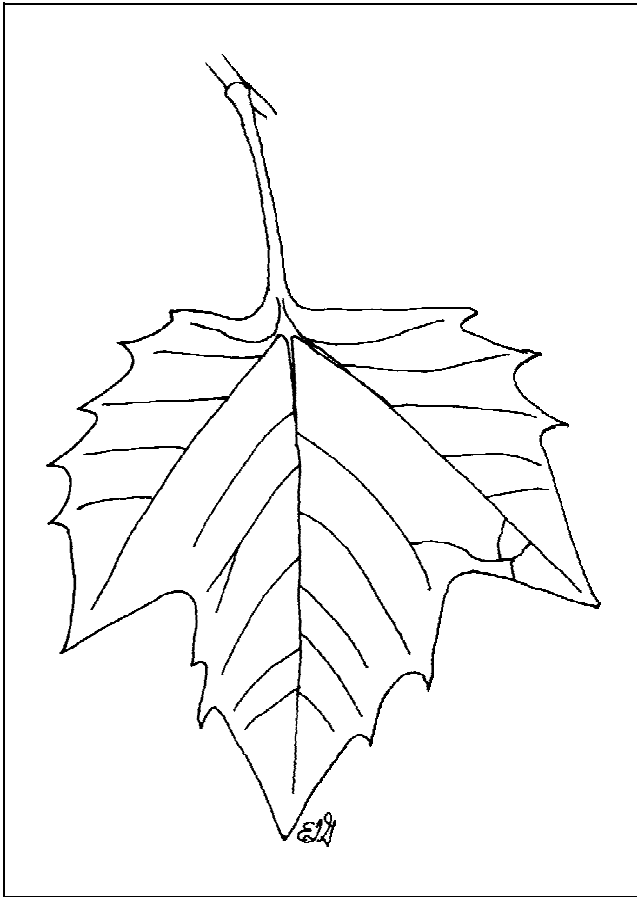


Figure 3. Foliage of Oriental Planetree.

USE AND MANAGEMENT

It was widely planted in many northern cities but bacterial leaf scorch and canker stain have killed many trees in these communities. If this tree is planted, do so with moderation to avoid these unfortunate problems.

Naturally found along streams and floodplain riverbeds, Oriental Planetree should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist soils. It grows on acid or alkaline soil, wet or dry. Leaves may drop early in dry years. Should be grown primarily for its resistance to anthracnose disease which can be devastating to American Sycamore, but it is now rare in the trade in the United States.

Pests and Diseases

Canker stain and stem canker can severely weaken or kill trees. Anthracnose can be serious in wet years, although this Planetree is more resistant than American Sycamore. Probably lace bug, and others.