



Acer barbatum Florida Maple¹

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INTRODUCTION

The Florida Maple (*Acer saccharum* var. *floridum*) -- formerly *Acer barbatum* -- is no longer considered to be a separate species (Fig. 1). The deciduous Florida Maple reaches 50 to 60 feet in height but is most often seen at 20 to 30 feet. Displaying muted yellow or orange fall leaf color, Florida Maple is ideal for use as a specimen, park or street tree, or for use in woodland areas. The round to oval growth habit makes it an ideal shade or street tree. The edges of the leaves turn under slightly giving them a distinct appearance. The trunk on older specimens resembles that on the Northern Sugar Maple, which is an attractive gray with longitudinal ribs.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Acer barbatum*

Pronunciation: AY-ser bar-BAY-tum

Common name(s): Florida Maple, Southern Sugar Maple

Family: *Aceraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 6B through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: 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; near a deck or patio; shade tree; residential street tree

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

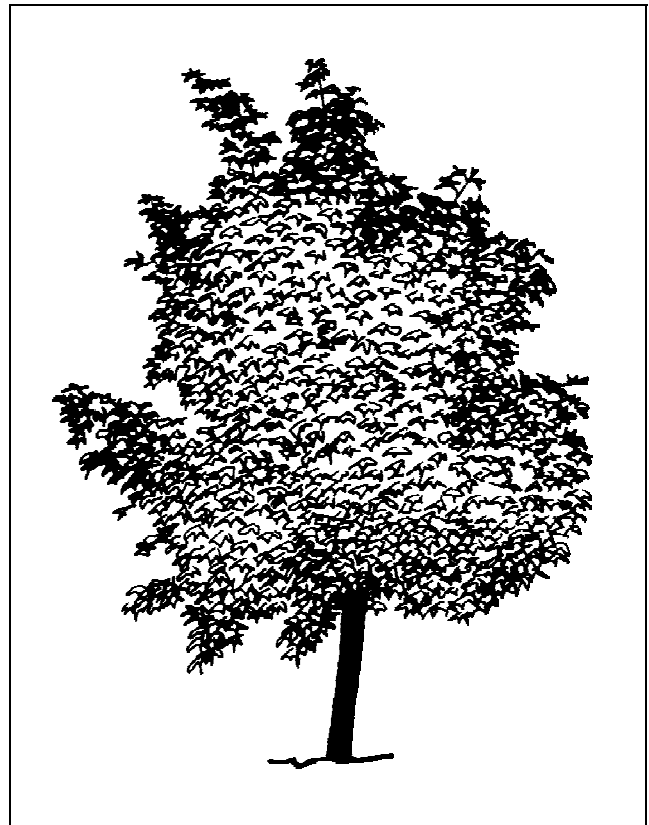


Figure 1. Middle-aged Florida Maple.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 60 feet

Spread: 25 to 40 feet

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

Crown shape: oval; round

Crown density: moderate

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Growth rate: medium

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: simple

Leaf margin: lobed; entire; undulate

Leaf shape: star-shaped

Leaf venation: palmate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: orange; yellow

Fall characteristic: showy

Flower

Flower color: red

Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown; green

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: grow mostly upright and will not droop; 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

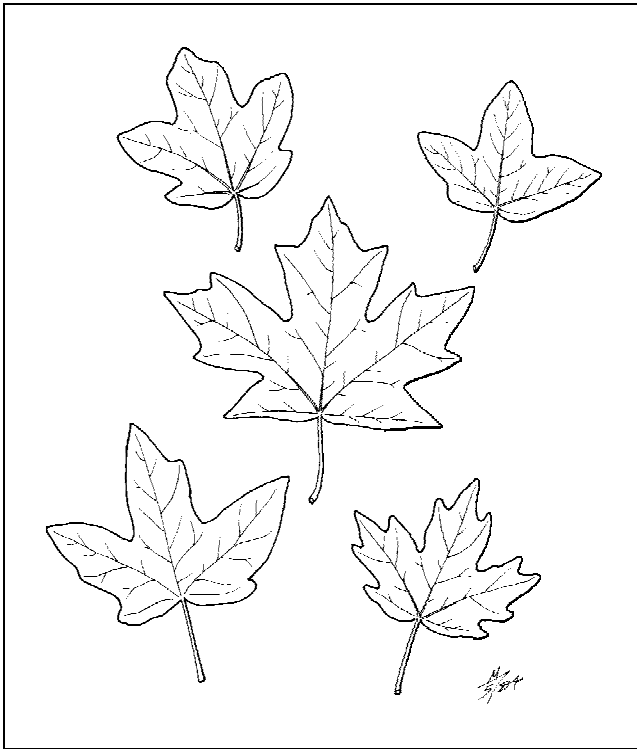


Figure 3. Foliage of Florida Maple.

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

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: none

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

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Growing in full sun or partial shade, Florida Maple will tolerate a wide variety of soil types but is not salt-tolerant. Established trees look better when given some irrigation during dry weather. While leaves will eventually fall, many remain in the central portion of the canopy for much of the winter giving the tree a somewhat unkempt appearance. The limbs of Maple are strong and not susceptible to wind damage. Roots are often shallow and reach the surface at an early age, even in sandy soil. Plant in an

area where grass below it will not need to be mowed so the roots will not be damaged by the mower.

Available cultivars include: 'Endowment Columnar', columnar form, red and yellow fall color; 'Goldspire', dense, compact, pyramidal form, gold fall color; 'Majesty', ovate form, resistant to frost cracking and sun scald, red-orange fall color; and 'Sweet Shadow Cutleaf', unusual vase-shaped growth form and variable yellow-orange fall color.

Propagation is by seeds or cuttings.

Pests

Cottony Maple scale, borers, aphids, and gall mites may be problems for Florida Maple.

Diseases

Florida Maple can be susceptible to a wilt disease.