**Acer campestre**
Hedge Maple

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson

**INTRODUCTION**

Hedge Maple is usually low-branched with a rounded form, but there is considerable variability from one tree to the next (Fig. 1). The branches are slender and branch profusely, lending a fine texture to the landscape particularly during winter. Lower branches can be removed to create clearance beneath the crown for vehicles and pedestrians. The tree eventually reaches a height and spread of 30 to 35 feet but it grows slowly. The small stature and vigorous growth make this an excellent street tree for residential areas, or perhaps in downtown urban sites. However, it grows a little too tall for planting beneath some power lines. It is also suitable as a patio or yard shade tree because it stays small and creates dense shade.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Scientific name:** Acer campestre  
**Pronunciation:** AY-ser kam-PESS-tree  
**Common name(s):** Hedge Maple  
**Family:** Aceraceae  
**USDA hardiness zones:** 5 through 8A (Fig. 2)  
**Origin:** not native to North America  
**Uses:** Bonsai; hedge; large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (> 6 feet wide); medium-sized parking lot islands (100-200 square feet in size); 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; screen; trainable as a standard; shade tree; small parking lot islands (< 100 square feet in size); narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); 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:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

**DESCRIPTION**

**Height:** 30 to 35 feet  
**Spread:** 30 to 35 feet  
**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms  
**Crown shape:** round  
**Crown density:** dense

---

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-10, 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.
Growth rate: slow
Texture: fine

Foliage
Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)
Leaf type: simple
Leaf margin: lobed; entire
Leaf shape: star-shaped
Leaf venation: 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: 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: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; not particularly showy; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: brown
Current year twig thickness: medium; thin

Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.
Figure 3. Foliage of Hedge Maple.

**Culture**

**Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun  
**Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained  
**Drought tolerance:** high  
**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate  
**Soil 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:** tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more  
**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time  
**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant  
**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible  
**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

**USE AND MANAGEMENT**

The tree excels in its ability to tolerate dry, alkaline soil but some protection from open winds is helpful. Not for highly compacted soil. It is well-suited for and looks great during drought in a partially shaded location or on the north side of a building. The common name alludes to the plants tolerance of severe pruning, and it will make a dense, tall screen, whether pruned or not. Branches are arranged closely on the trunk and some pruning is usually desirable to create a well-formed tree. The main ornamental feature is the bright yellow fall color. There appears to be variability in color from one year to the next and from tree to tree. Prune early in the life of the tree to develop several major branches well-spaced along a central trunk. This will improve the durability of the tree compared to trees with many upright and spreading branches originating from one point on the trunk.

‘Evelyn’ may be more vigorous, has an upright branching habit but is cold tolerant only to USDA hardiness zone 6. ‘Compactum’ is dwarf, ‘Postelense’ has golden leaves; ‘Queen Elizabeth’ is more upright-formed than the species and makes a good street tree.

**Pests**

Pests are usually not serious, but there are some potential problems.

Leaf stalk borer and petiole-borer cause the same type of injury. Both insects bore into the leaf stalk just below the leaf blade. The leaf stalk shrivels, turns black, and the leaf blade falls off. The leaf drop may appear heavy but serious injury to a healthy tree is rare.

Aphids infest maples, usually norway maple, and may be numerous at times. High populations can cause leaf drop. Another sign of heavy aphid infestation is honey dew on lower leaves and objects beneath the tree. Aphids are controlled by spraying or they may be left alone. If not sprayed, predatory insects will usually bring the aphid population under control.

Scales are an occasional problem on maples. Perhaps the most common is cottony maple scale. The insect forms a cottony mass on the lower sides of branches. Scales are controlled with horticultural oil sprays. Scales may also be controlled with other well-timed sprays to kill the crawlers.

If borers become a problem it is an indication the tree is not growing well. Controlling borers involves keeping trees healthy. Chemical controls of existing infestations are more difficult. Proper control involves identification of the borer infesting the tree then applying insecticides at the proper time.
**Diseases**

Verticillium wilt symptoms are wilting and death of branches. Infected sapwood will be stained a dark or olive green but staining can't always be found. If staining can not be found do not assume the problem is not verticillium wilt. Severely infected trees probably can't be saved. Lightly infected trees showing only a few wilted branches may be pulled through. Fertilize and prune lightly infected trees. This treatment will not cure the problem but may allow the tree to outgrow the infection. Girdling roots will cause symptoms which mimic verticillium wilt.

Tar spot and a variety of leaf spots cause some concern among homeowners but are rarely serious enough for control.