



Platanus x acerifolia 'Bloodgood' 'Bloodgood' London Planetree¹

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INTRODUCTION

A large tree resulting in a cross between *Platanus orientalis* and *Platanus occidentalis* suitable for use in USDA hardiness zone 4b or warmer (Fig. 1). The tree will reach a height of 85 feet and a spread of 70 feet. Pyramidal in youth, it develops a spreading rounded crown with age supported by a few, very large-diameter branches. These branches should be spaced two to four feet apart along the trunk to develop a strong structure. The dominant central leader which typically develops on London Planetree usually assures that the structure of major limbs is desirable with little corrective pruning required other than removing occasionally occurring upright branches with tight crotches. It is also helpful to thin out the many branches which develop early on the central trunk. The bark is patchy and very attractive and may be the plants best ornamental attribute. These patches range from creamy-white to olive-green. Large sections of bark may be shed from the tree as it grows older. This is normal and only needs to be disposed of.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Platanus x acerifolia* 'Bloodgood'

Pronunciation: PLAT-uh-nus x
ass-er-ih-FOLE-ee-uh

Common name(s): 'Bloodgood' London Planetree

Family: *Platanaceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 5 through 9A (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip

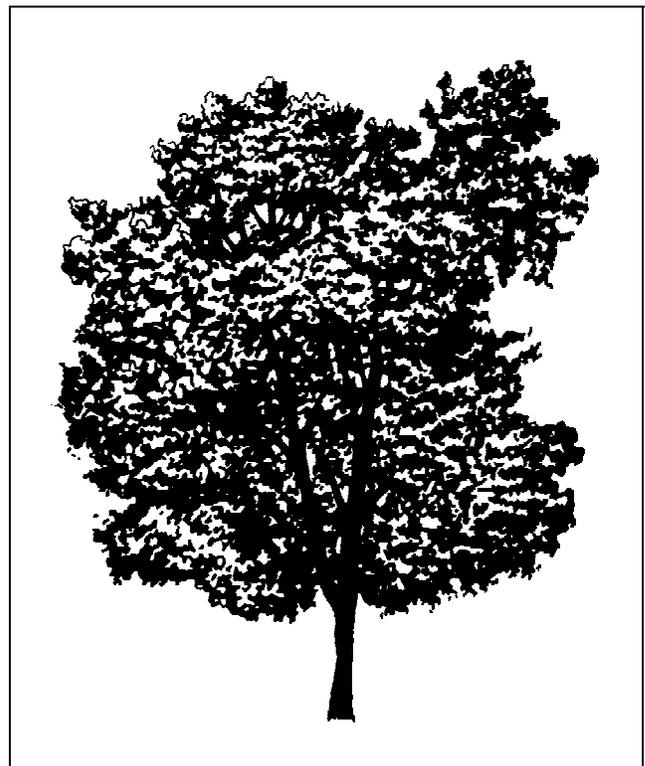


Figure 1. Middle-aged 'Bloodgood' London Planetree.

plantings in the highway; shade tree; 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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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 70 to 85 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; spreading; pyramidal

Crown density: dense

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: pinnate; palmate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 8 to 12 inches; 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: yellow

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: red

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

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

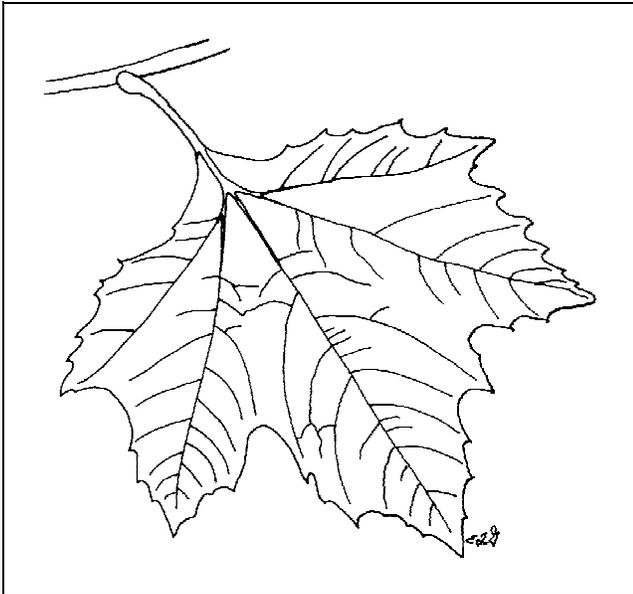


Figure 3. Foliage of 'Bloodgood' London Planetree.

Current year twig thickness: medium

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; extended flooding; well-drained

Drought tolerance: high

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: moderate

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: tree has outstanding ornamental features and could be planted more

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

USE AND MANAGEMENT

The plant tolerates dry soil (but scorches in dry weather) and city conditions well, adapts to most soils including alkaline and is more resistant (not immune) to the anthracnose that afflicts *Platanus occidentalis*. However, it is susceptible to canker stain, a disease

which has caused its demise in some areas, and is often seen infested with lace bugs which will not kill the tree but causes premature defoliation in late summer. It is also reported to be susceptible to ozone pollution injury in laboratory tests at levels often present during the summer, but damage from air pollution in the landscapes appears minimal. Some people object to the large leaves which often begin falling from the tree in late summer.

Some horticulturists consider this a messy tree due to early leaf drop from drought, bark shedding, and lace bugs. Leaves blow around in the wind during the fall and decompose slowly in the landscape creating a distinctive "crunch" underfoot. Leaves make great compost in a compost pile.

Some tree managers limit use as a street tree due to its large size, susceptibility to canker stain, bacterial leaf scorch, and lace bug injury. But it is a good durable tree for many areas where soil is poor and compacted. Also somewhat tolerant of coastal conditions, and well-adapted to areas with poor drainage. But it may be best saved for moist sites with plenty of room for root and crown expansion.

The National Arboretum in 1984 released two *Platanus occidentalis* x *Platanus orientalis* which could prove to be superior to the parents: *Platanus x acerifolia* 'Columbia' - upright, orange-grey bark, five-lobed leaves; *Platanus x acerifolia* 'Liberty' - upright pyramid, five-lobed leaves, reportedly more resistant to powdery mildew and anthracnose, though not immune.

Pests

Aphids will suck the sap from Planetree leaves. Heavy infestations deposit honeydew on lower leaves and objects beneath the tree, such as cars and sidewalks.

Sycamore lace bugs feed on the undersides of the leaves causing a stippled appearance and premature defoliation in late summer. The insects leave black flecks on the lower leaf surface. Neither aphids nor lace bugs will kill the tree.

Diseases

Some fungi cause leaf spots.

Anthracnose: 'Bloodgood' has been shown to be resistant to anthracnose, but it is not immune.

Anthracnose causes early symptoms on young leaves resembling frost injury. When the leaves are almost fully grown light brown areas appear along the veins. Later the infected leaves fall off and trees may be nearly completely defoliated in spring or early summer. The disease can cause twig and branch cankers and a witches-broom appearance at the end of the branches. The trees send out a second crop of leaves but repeated attacks can lower tree vigor. Use a properly labeled fungicide to help control the disease. Fertilization helps trees withstand repeated defoliation.

Canker stain is very serious on London Planetree and can kill the tree.

Bacterial leaf scorch can devastate London Planetree.