



# *Platanus orientalis* Oriental Planetree<sup>1</sup>

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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

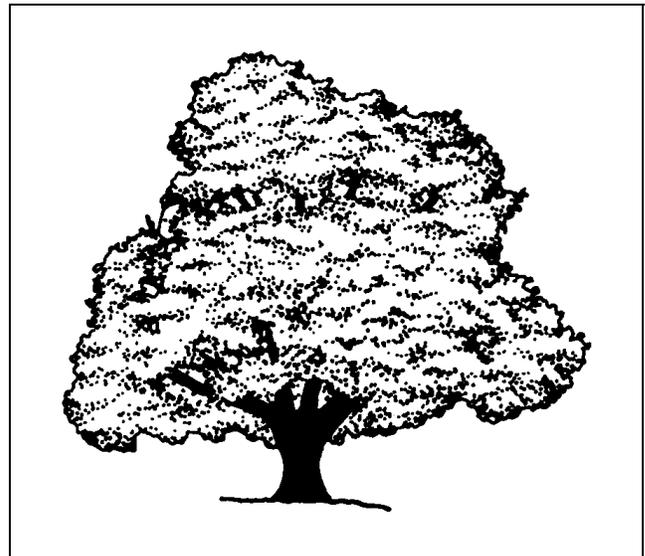


Figure 1. Mature Oriental Planetree.

**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

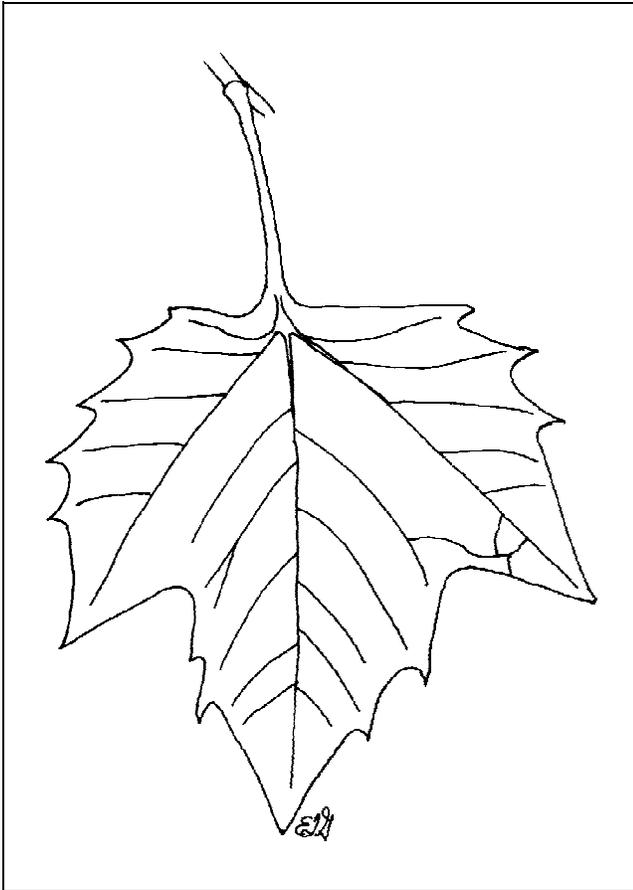
**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**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.