



## *Platanus orientalis* var. *digitata* Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree<sup>1</sup>

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson<sup>2</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

This deciduous tree is a selection from one of the parents of the popular London Planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and has more deeply lobed leaves than the species (Fig. 1). The leaves roll up on the ground and do not blow around in the fall like other *Platanus* spp. Leaves are almost silver maple-like. Capable of reaching perhaps 80 feet in height, the Oriental Planetree has very strong branches and was quite useful as a shade tree until disease struck. The wood of *Platanus* spp. 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* var. *digitata*

**Pronunciation:** PLAT-uh-nus or-ee-en-TAY-liss  
variety dij-ih-TAY-tuh

**Common name(s):** Cut-Leaf 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

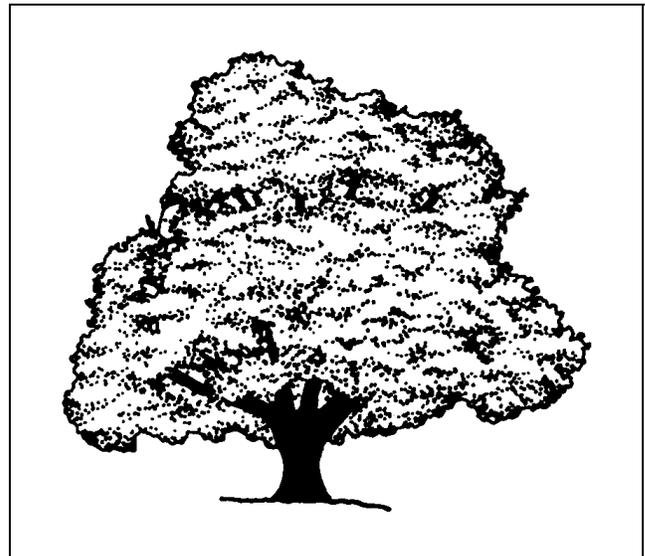


Figure 1. Mature Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree.

### DESCRIPTION

**Height:** 50 to 80 feet

**Spread:** 40 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

**Crown density:** moderate

**Growth rate:** fast

**Texture:** coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

### Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)  
**Leaf type:** simple  
**Leaf margin:** lobed; incised; serrate  
**Leaf shape:** ovate  
**Leaf venation:** palmate  
**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous  
**Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches  
**Leaf color:** green  
**Fall color:** yellow  
**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; no significant litter problem; showy

### Trunk and Branches

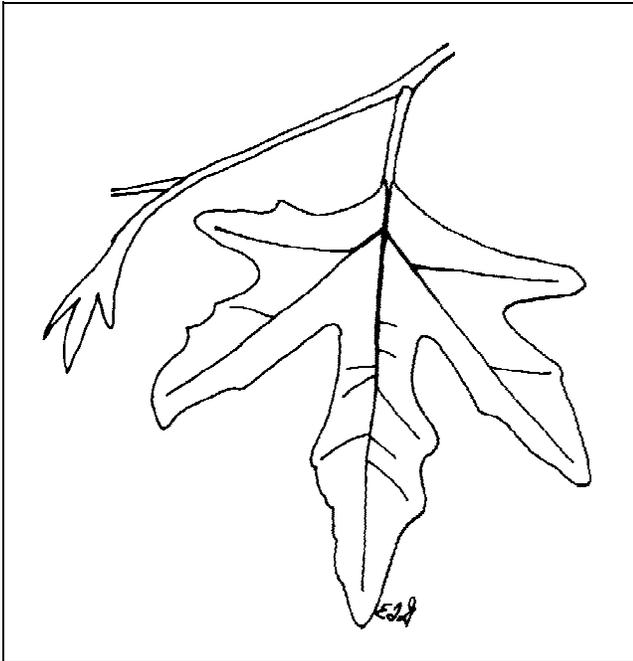
**Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns  
**Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure  
**Breakage:** resistant  
**Current 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



**Figure 3.** Foliage of Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree.

trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**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

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 rare in the trade.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily but they transpire fast so they need lots of mist in the first week after being inserted into the growing media.

### Pests

Pests are probably lace bug, and others.

### Diseases

The cultivar probably will be subjected to the same disease problems as the species.