Acer platanoides
(Norway maple)

COMMON NAME
Norway maple

FULL SCIENTIFIC NAME
Acer platanoides L.

FAMILY NAME COMMON
Maple family

FAMILY SCIENTIFIC NAME
Aceraceae

IMAGES
- Fruit
- Flowers with
- Incursion
- Acer saccharum fruit for comparison
- Old bark
- Fall color with
**DESCRIPTION**

Botanical Glossary

*Acer platanoides* is a tree that usually grows to 12-18 m (40-60 ft.) in height, but can reach heights of 30 m (100 ft.). The bark of the tree is grayish and regularly and shallowly grooved. The palmately lobed leaves are opposite and have 5 to 7 sharply acuminate lobes (with large but few teeth). These leaves are 10-18 cm (4-7 in.) wide. The leaf petioles exude a white sap when broken. The leaves are usually green in color, but there are some cultivars that have dark red leaves. The fall color of the green leaves is yellow.

The flowers appear in April and May and are yellow-green in color. They are borne in erect, pedunculate, rounded corymbs. Each flower is 5-6 mm (0.25 in.) wide. The pendulous fruit measure 4-5 cm (1.5-2 in.) in length. The fruit are samaras that are green when young and turn yellow, then brown, with age. The samara wings are divergent, reaching nearly 180 degree angle to each other.

**Page References** Bailey 637, Fernald 986, Gleason & Cronquist 352, Holmgren 331, Magee & Ahles 719, Seymour 379. See reference section below for full citations.

**SIMILAR SPECIES**

*Acer saccharum* Marsh. (sugar maple)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th><em>Acer platanoides</em></th>
<th><em>Acer saccharum</em></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angle of seed wings</td>
<td>180 degrees</td>
<td>120 degrees or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sap color when petiole is broken</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bark</td>
<td>Regularly grooved</td>
<td>Thick, irregular plates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Seeds

| Thin in cross section | Thick in cross section |

REPRODUCTIVE/DISPERSAL MECHANISMS

*Acer platanoides* seeds are contained in winged samaras that are dispersed by wind.

DISTRIBUTION

*Acer platanoides* is native to continental Europe. In the U.S. it is found in the northeast from Maine to Minnesota and South to North Carolina and Tennessee. It is also found in the states of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. It is found in all the states of New England.

HISTORY OF INTRODUCTION IN NEW ENGLAND

The first documented introduction of *Acer platanoides* to the northeast was by John Bartram of Philadelphia, in 1756. Bartram later offered it for sale in his garden catalogue in 1762. Multiple sources of seed from Europe were available shortly after this initial introduction (Norwalk & Rowan, 1990).

HABITATS IN NEW ENGLAND

- Early Successional Forest
- Forest Wetland
- Late Successional Forest
- Open Disturbed Area
- Roadside
- Vacant Lot
- Yard or Garden

*Acer platanoides* has a wide distribution throughout New England, in part due to its extensive planting as a street and ornamental tree. It has naturalized to nearby woods such as urban woodlots, forest edges and fragmented forests, and from there has moved on to less disturbed habitats.

THREATS

*Acer platanoides* is able to shade out native understory vegetation such as spring ephemerals, and eventually out-competes native tree species in the forest canopy. Thus, it can reduce native species diversity and change the structure of forest habitats.

MANAGEMENT LINKS
The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group Invasive Plant Management Guide
Comprehensive management information.

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS

Documentation required: Specific photograph or mounted snippet of the inflorescence, fruit or leaves
Best time for documentation: Spring, summer, fall

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

University of Connecticut Plant Database
General information and many photographs

The PLANTS database
General information and a map

Integrated Taxonomic Information System
Taxonomic information about the species

Virginia Tech Dendrology
Description and photographs

The Nature Conservancy
Images

REFERENCES


DATA RETRIEVAL

Select a task by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

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- Export as comma-delimited text file

Submit Selection

MAPS OF PLANT DISTRIBUTION IN NEW ENGLAND

Select a study area by clicking the radio button and then click "Submit Selection."

- The whole New England area
- One or more states
- One or more counties
- One or more towns (county sub-divisions)

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