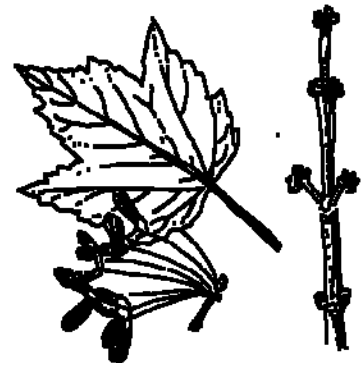


# Maine Tree Species Fact Sheet

**Common Names:** Red Maple (Swamp Maple, Soft Maple, White Maple)

**Botanical name:** *Acer rubrum*



<http://ua.dnr.wi.gov/org/land/Forestry/TreeID/TreePgs/images/acerrubrum.gif>

**Tree Type:** Deciduous

## **Physical Description:**

**Growth Habit:** Red maple is a medium-size tree that is fast growing. It has a moderate tolerance to salt and alkali soils, prefers wetlands and poorly drained sites, but will do well in most sites. The bark is smooth and light gray on young trees, dark gray and scaly or furrowed on older trees. The buds are oblong to rounded, red and often clustered. The leaves are opposite, 3-5 lobed, margins irregularly double-toothed, 3-5 inches long, upper surface is light green, underside is light silvery green with hairy veins. In the fall, leaves have an orange to red color. The flowers are produced in clusters on stalks before the leaf buds open. Males are yellowish-red while females are bright scarlet. The twigs are red, straight and stiff and have no rank odor when broken.

**Height:** Red maple can attain a height of 50-60 feet, with a spread less or equal to height and a diameter of 1-2 feet.

**Shape:** Young trees are pyramidal or elliptical while older trees have rounded crowns.

## **Fruit/Seed Description/Dispersal Methods:**

The fruit is paired wings,  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long, often reddish maturing to brown. It appears in dense clusters before the leaves and germinates as soon as it falls to the ground.

## **Range within Maine:**

Red maple is found throughout the state. It is typically found in swamps and poorly drained sites. This species is hardy to Zone 3.

## **Distinguishing Features:**

The distinguishing features of the red maple include its red buds and twigs, and the sharp angle between leaf lobes.

## **Interesting Facts:**

The red maple is important because of its abundance and rapid growth. It has a variety of uses including pulp, pallets, furniture, framing and plywood. It is becoming more widely used by mills, as sugar maples are becoming more expensive. The wood of the red maple is hard, close-grained, heavy, moderately strong and easily worked. The wood is not durable.

Native Americans used the bark for medicinal reasons including treating coughs, as an analgesic, a wash for swollen eyes, cataracts and a remedy for hives.

## **Landscape Use:**

The red maple is an excellent ornamental with outstanding but often inconsistent fall color. It is an excellent tree for lawns, parks and streets. However, it does not tolerate heavily polluted areas.

## **Common Problems or Pests of the Tree in Maine:**

Pests include leaf hoppers, borers and maple leaf roller. The red maple tends to have sharp crotch angles, which over time, can lead to potential structural problems.

## **References:**

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*Tree, Shrubs and Groundcovers – Royalty Free Samples:* [www.industrialsoftware.net](http://www.industrialsoftware.net)

