Red Maple

Acer rubrum



Red Maple in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Height: 50 feet

Spread: 40 feet

Sunlight: ○

Hardiness Zone: 3

Other Names: Swamp Maple, Scarlet Maple

Description:

The tree that lights up New England yellow and red in fall; a great shade tree, but very intolerant of alkaline soils; fall color is not consistently red in the species, so the many named cultivars are often chosen

Ornamental Features

Red Maple features showy clusters of red flowers along the branches in early spring before the leaves. It has green deciduous foliage which emerges red in spring. The lobed leaves turn an outstanding red in the fall. It produces red samaras in late spring. The furrowed silver bark and brick red branches add an interesting dimension to the landscape.



Red Maple in fall
Photo courtesy of NetPS Plant Finder

Landscape Attributes

Red Maple is a deciduous tree with a shapely oval form. Its average texture blends into the landscape, but can be balanced by one or two finer or coarser trees or shrubs for an effective composition.

This is a relatively low maintenance tree, and should only be pruned in summer after the leaves have fully developed, as it may 'bleed' sap if pruned in late winter or early spring. It has no significant negative characteristics.

Red Maple is recommended for the following landscape applications;

- Accent
- Shade

Planting & Growing

Red Maple will grow to be about 50 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of 40 feet. It has a high canopy with a typical clearance of 7 feet from the ground, and should not be planted underneath power lines. As it matures, the lower branches of this tree can be strategically removed to create a high enough canopy to support unobstructed human traffic underneath. It grows at a medium rate, and under ideal conditions can be expected to live for 80 years or more.

This tree should only be grown in full sunlight. It is quite adaptable, prefering to grow in average to wet conditions, and will even tolerate some standing water. It is not particular as to soil type, but has a definite preference for acidic soils, and is subject to chlorosis (yellowing) of the foliage in alkaline soils. It is somewhat tolerant of urban pollution. This species is native to parts of North America.