

Acer rubrum L.

Red maple



Sources:

Natural Resources Conservation Service. *PLANTS Database*. United States Department of Agriculture.

NC State. *North Carolina Extension Gardener Plant Toolbox*.

The Maple Family (Aceraceae)

This native, deciduous tree grows 40 to 70 feet high and has a diameter between 1.5 - 2.5 feet across. It has a slightly smaller leaf than most other species of maples and the margins are serrated. Early in the fall, the leaves turn a bright red; leaf color can vary from tree to tree.

Habitat:

It's found in upland deciduous forests and is tolerant of a wide range of soils, including clay. It prefers moist, slightly acidic conditions. It is very cold hardy and grows fairly fast with tolerance to urban conditions.

Interesting Facts:

The sap contains sugar which can be used as a drink or concentrated into a syrup by boiling off the water.

Fruit:

Its fruit is "V" shaped; red, pink, or yellow winged samaras about 3/4 of an inch long.

Flower:

It has red burgundy flowers less than an inch in size that bloom in spring before leaves appear.

Wildlife value:

The flower nectar attracts bees and other pollinators. Seeds are enjoyed by birds. The fruit, along with the buds are a primary food source for gray squirrels. Sprouts are a favorite food for white-tailed deer.