

Red Maple

Acer rubrum

Red maple is famous for its crimson fall hues. In the summer, you can recognize it by its leaves with three distinct lobes. Songbirds, turkeys, and other game birds eat the winged seeds (called “samaras”). Maple wood is hard but brittle and is of little commercial value besides firewood and cheap furniture. Red maple bark can be turned into a brown to black dye, and the tree can be tapped for maple syrup.

Height: 40’ to 65’, exceptional trees may grow to over 75’.

In favorable sites, red maples can grow 1’ per year until maturity.

Planting environment:

Soil composition: Tolerates most soils

Soil moisture: Adaptable, but prefers moist soils with good drainage.

Sunlight: Part shade (about 4 hours of sun/day)

Space seedlings 10’-15’ apart. Seedlings can survive in the shade but eventually need light to grow. You can also plant in sunnier areas for a better chance of becoming established.

Maintenance:

Clear thick brush or vegetation that is taller than the saplings. Monitor trees for any cracks or splits from winter ice, and consider pruning forked branches.

Lifespan: up to 150 years

Top diseases/pests:

1. Verticillium wilt
2. Ice/wind damage

