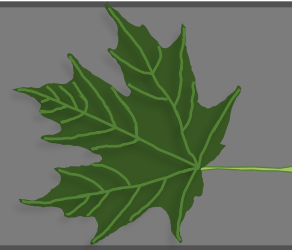


# Sugar Maple

*Acer saccharum*



Sugar maple, the primary source of maple syrup, is native to Aitkin County. 3" – 5" long leaves have five points, and of Aitkin County's native maple species, looks the closest to the maple represented on the Canadian flag. 1" seeds, called samaras, drift down from the tree in late summer to early fall. Seeds are eaten by songbirds, squirrels, wild turkeys, and other game birds. Seedlings and young branches are browsed by rabbits and deer. Although maple syrup can be made from any maple, sugar maple sap has the greatest concentration of sugar in its sap, making it the highest-yielding tree. The wood of sugar maples is hard and strong, used commercially for flooring, furniture and firewood under the name of hard or rock maple.

**Height:** 70' - 100'

Sugar maple is slow-growing, and after reaching several feet in height, can remain stagnant for many years (possibly up to 120) until receiving enough sunlight to grow tall.

## **Planting environment:**

*Soil composition:* Sand, loam, silty loams

*Soil moisture:* Well-drained to moist, not flooded or dry

*Sunlight:* Full shade (<4 hours of sunlight/day)



In the forest setting, sugar maples are prolific seed producers and it is usually unnecessary to plant. If planting, however, sugar maple seedlings should be spaced at least 10' – 15' apart, depending on any planned thinning. Seedlings are very tolerant of shade, but will need sufficient light to grow measurably.

## **Maintenance:**

In order to encourage growth, clear any thick brush or vegetation that grows taller than the saplings. Sugar maple is vulnerable to cracking in the winter due to ice formation. Monitor trees for any cracks or splits, and consider pruning forked branches.

**Lifespan:** up to 300 or 400 years

## **Top diseases/pests:**

1. Verticillium wilt
2. Ice/wind damage

