

***Acer griseum*: Paperbark Maple¹**

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Introduction

Perhaps the most beautiful maple, paperbark maple has trifoliate leaves and wonderfully orange to bronze, peeling, papery bark which provides year round interest. The bark begins peeling on the sculptured trunk and on 2-or 3-year-old branches. It may be cinnamon brown or orange but is usually a dark reddish-brown, looking particularly striking in the snow. Even small branches display exfoliating bark making this a true specimen tree, even at a young age. Most specimens are seen with multiple trunks which branch close to the ground, but proper training when young can create a single trunk. Paperbark maple has vibrant, scarlet, autumn foliage.



Figure 1. Middle-aged *Acer griseum*: Paperbark Maple

General Information

Scientific name: *Acer griseum*

Pronunciation: AY-ser GRISS-ee-um

Common name(s): Paperbark maple

Family: *Aceraceae*

USDA hardiness zones: 4A through 7B (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: little invasive potential

Uses: highway median; container or planter; specimen; deck or patio; Bonsai

Availability: not native to North America



Figure 2. Range

Description

Height: 15 to 25 feet

Spread: 15 to 25 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

1. This document is ENH-176, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 1993. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

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Crown shape: vase, oval, upright/erect

Crown density: open

Growth rate: slow

Texture: fine

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: trifoliate, odd-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: serrate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval), ovate

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 2 to 4 inches, 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: red

Fall characteristic: showy

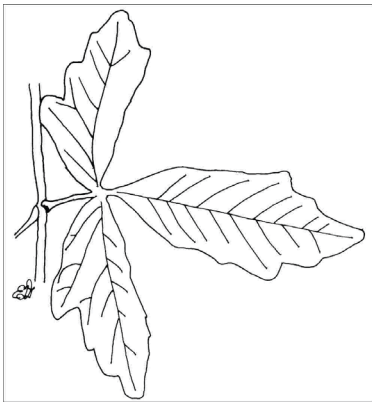


Figure 3. Foliage

Flower

Flower color: green

Flower characteristics: not showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated, oval

Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: brown

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches don't droop; very showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

Pruning requirement: little required

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thin, medium

Wood specific gravity: unknown

Culture

Light requirement: full sun, partial sun or partial shade, shade tolerant

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; acidic; slightly alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: yes

Outstanding tree: yes

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: susceptible

Pest resistance: resistant to pests/diseases

Use and Management

The multi-stemmed habit, unusual leaves, and wonderful bark makes this a prime candidate for specimen planting in any commercial, institutional, or residential landscape. If you can find it, plant it by a patio or other prime location and light it from below for nighttime enjoyment.

The tree is hardy, grows very slowly to 25 or 30 feet tall, but, unfortunately, is difficult and expensive to propagate. It does not tolerate extended drought or other environmental stresses in the south or in poor soil (moderate drought-tolerance in sandy loam) but will grow in sun or shade. Leaves will scorch during dry summers unless provided with some irrigation. Probably best in partial shade if planted in the south. The beauty of this tree makes up for the extra effort required to grow it. If this plant could be easily propagated, it would be widely used because the price of the plant would drop to levels acceptable to most people.

Pests and Diseases

Probably has similar pest and disease problems as other maples.