



Bulletin #2561, Striped Maple or Moosewood

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Native Trees and Shrubs for Maine Landscapes

Striped Maple or Moosewood

(Acer pensylvanicum)

Developed by Marjorie Peronto, associate Extension professor, University of Maine Cooperative Extension; and Reeser C. Manley, assistant professor of horticulture, University of Maine.

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Go native!

This series of publications is the result of a five-year research project that evaluated the adaptability of a variety of native trees and shrubs to the stresses of urban and residential landscapes in Maine. Non-native invasive plants pose a serious threat to Maine's biodiversity. Plants such as Japanese barberry, shrubby honeysuckle, and Asiatic bittersweet, originally introduced for their ornamental features, have escaped from our landscapes, colonizing natural areas and displacing native plants and animals. By landscaping with native plants, we can create vegetation corridors that link fragmented wild areas, providing food and shelter for the native wildlife that is an integral part of our ecosystem. Your landscape choices can have an impact on the environment that goes far beyond your property lines.

Description

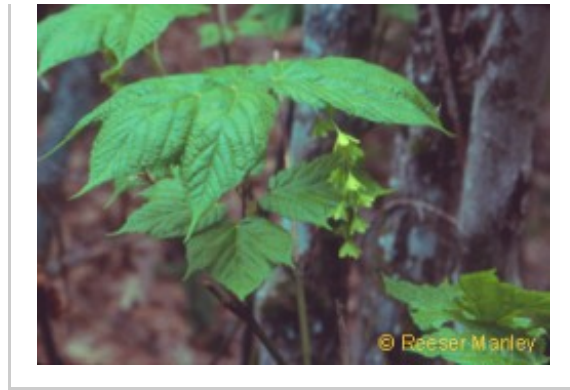
Form: a short-trunked tree with ascending, arching branches and a broad, flat-topped to rounded crown

Size: 15 to 30 feet high, with a spread less than or equal to height

Ornamental characteristics:

Photo by Reeser C. Manley

- young trunk and branches are green with conspicuous, long, vertical white stripes
- six-inch-long pendulous clusters of pale yellow spring flowers
- large, bright green leaves turn vibrant yellow in the fall



Landscape Use

The key to success with striped maple lies in keeping its roots cool and moist. Use it in the woodland garden beneath the shade of taller deciduous trees, keeping company with mountain maple (*Acer spicatum*), pagoda dogwood (*Cornus alternifolia*), and witchhazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), and underplanted with mapleleaf viburnum (*Viburnum acerifolium*) and hobblebush (*V. alnifolium*). In more open areas, mulch over the entire root system, at least three times the width of the canopy, and water during summer drought. Avoid using striped maple near “heat islands,” areas with extensive paving or building walls.



Photo by Reeser C. Manley

Another common name for *A. pensylvanicum* is “moosewood.” It is a favorite browse of both moose and deer and, in the wild, is often reduced by browsing to a multi-stemmed shrub. Be careful not to use this tree in gardens visited by moose or deer!

Culture

Hardiness: USDA zone 3b

Soil requirements: prefers moderately to well-drained, slightly acidic soils

Light requirements: shade or partial shade

Stress tolerances:

soil compaction—intolerant

pollution—unknown

deicing salts—intolerant

Photo by Reeser C. Manley

urban heat islands—intolerant
drought—intolerant
seasonal flooding—intolerant

Insect and disease problems: leaf scorch (from too much sun)



Wildlife Value

In the wild, the bark and young shoots of striped maple provide winter food for cottontail, deer, moose, and beaver. Of course, trees subjected to this browsing are transformed into multi-stemmed shrubs with little landscape value.



Maintenance

Irrigation: During the establishment period, defined as one year after planting for each inch of trunk diameter at planting time, water your trees regularly during the growing season. Give the root zone of each tree 1 inch of water per week; in general, a tree's root zone extends twice as wide as its canopy. After the establishment period, provide supplemental irrigation during periods of severe drought.

Fertilization: Landscape trees and shrubs should not be fertilized unless a soil test indicates a need. Correct soil pH, if necessary, by amending the backfill soil. No nitrogen fertilizer should be added at planting or during the first growing season.

Reviewed by Cathy Neal, Extension professor, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

Photos by Reeser C. Manley.

Illustration by Margery Read, Extension master gardener.

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