



TREE OF THE MONTH

Red Maple • *Acer rubrum*

ALSO KNOWN AS: SWAMP MAPLE, SOFT MAPLE

Sugar Maple • *Acer saccharum*

ALSO KNOWN AS: ROCK MAPLE, HARD MAPLE

Red maple (*Acer rubrum*) is a medium-sized, deciduous tree reaching up to 60 feet tall. Native to eastern and central North America, red maples are one of the most adaptive species in their range - growing in a wide variety of habitats from drier uplands to rich swamp borders.

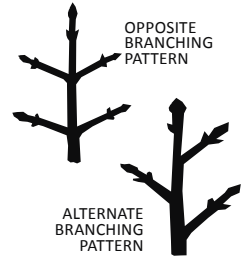
Red maple bark matures from smooth, light brown on young trees to a dark grey with long, narrow plates on older trees.

Red maples are often one of the first trees to bloom in early spring, starting in March long before the leaves unfurl. The flowers are easy to spot with their red or orange flowers in clusters on the previous year's twigs.

In the autumn, red maple foliage is often bright red, but can be golden or yellow as well.

Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) is a large, deciduous tree reaching up to 90 feet tall. Native to the northern portions of eastern and central North America, sugar maples are one of the most economically important trees on the continent. Prized for their hard wood, sap for syrup, and brilliant orange and red autumn foliage, sugar maples are the state tree of Vermont and the national tree of Canada. They favor deep, rich, moist soils. Seedlings can tolerate years of shade, waiting for the canopy to open to grow larger.

Sugar maple bark matures from smooth brown to deeply furrowed, irregular plates that are light grey to mid-brown. Mature sugar maple trunks often have large cavities, providing habitat to many animal species. Birds and small mammals eat the seeds.



Maples are one of the few genera (plural of genus) that have an opposite branching pattern. Other species with opposite branching patterns include ashes (genus *Fraxinus*), dogwoods (genus *Cornus*), horsechestnuts (genus *Aesculus*), and the viburnum family.

Maples have lobed leaves. Different species have differing numbers of lobes. Red maples usually have 3 lobes (can have as many as 5) with toothed margins and v-shaped notches (sinuses) between lobes. Sugar maples usually have 5 lobes with smooth margins and u-shaped sinuses.

Maple seeds are paired with wings. Commonly called 'helicopters,' the scientific name for these is *samaras*.

Tree of the Month is a collaboration between BEAT, the City of Pittsfield, Pittsfield Tree Watch, and the MA Department of Conservation & Recreation's Greening the Gateway Cities Program. Find out more at thebeatnews.org.





Sugar Maple
Acer saccharum

Red Maple
Acer rubrum