

# *Acer campestre*: Hedge Maple<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Hedge Maple is usually low-branched with a rounded form, but there is considerable variability from one tree to the next. The branches are slender and branch profusely, lending a fine texture to the landscape particularly during winter. Lower branches can be removed to create clearance beneath the crown for vehicles and pedestrians. The tree eventually reaches a height and spread of 30 to 35 feet but it grows slowly. The small stature and vigorous growth make this an excellent street tree for residential areas, or perhaps in downtown urban sites. However, it grows a little too tall for planting beneath some power lines. It is also suitable as a patio or yard shade tree because it stays small and creates dense shade.

## General Information

**Scientific name:** *Acer campestre*

**Pronunciation:** AY-ser kam-PESS-tree

**Common name(s):** Hedge Maple

**Family:** *Aceraceae*

**USDA hardiness zones:** 5A through 8A (Fig. 2)

**Origin:** not native to North America

**Invasive potential:** little invasive potential

**Uses:** highway median; parking lot island < 100 sq ft; parking lot island 100-200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft; urban tolerant; specimen; street without sidewalk; deck or patio; shade; screen; hedge; trained as a standard; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); tree lawn 3-4 feet wide; tree lawn 4-6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; Bonsai

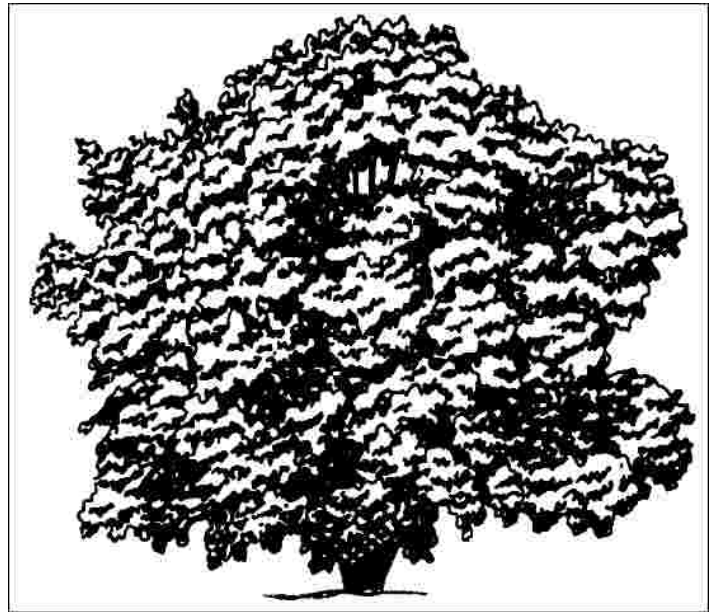


Figure 1. Mature *Acer campestre*: Hedge Maple

**Availability:** somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

## Description

**Height:** 30 to 35 feet

**Spread:** 30 to 35 feet

**Crown uniformity:** symmetrical

**Crown shape:** round

**Crown density:** dense

**Growth rate:** slow

**Texture:** fine

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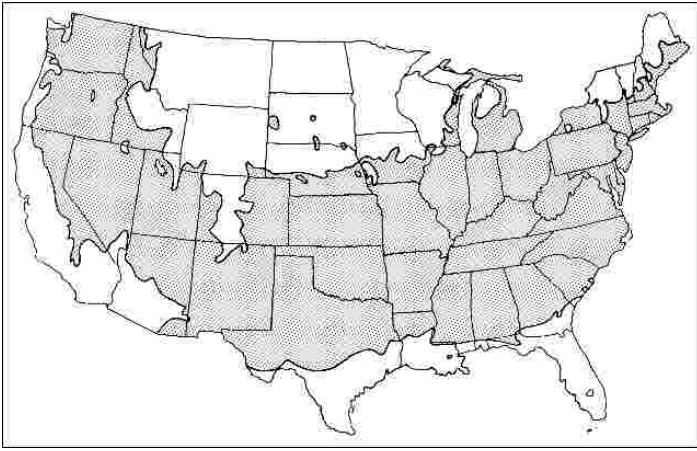


Figure 2. Range

## Foliage

**Leaf arrangement:** opposite/subopposite (Fig. 3)

**Leaf type:** simple

**Leaf margin:** entire, lobed

**Leaf shape:** star-shaped

**Leaf venation:** palmate

**Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous

**Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches

**Leaf color:** green

**Fall color:** yellow

**Fall characteristic:** showy

## Flower

**Flower color:** green

**Flower characteristics:** not showy

## Fruit

**Fruit shape:** oval

**Fruit length:** 1 to 3 inches

**Fruit covering:** dry or hard

**Fruit color:** brown, green

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

## Trunk and Branches

**Trunk/bark/branches:** branches droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns

**Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure

**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

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

**Drought tolerance:** high

**Aerosol salt tolerance:** moderate

## Other

**Roots:** not a problem

**Winter interest:** yes

**Outstanding tree:** yes

**Ozone sensitivity:** tolerant

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** free of serious pests and diseases

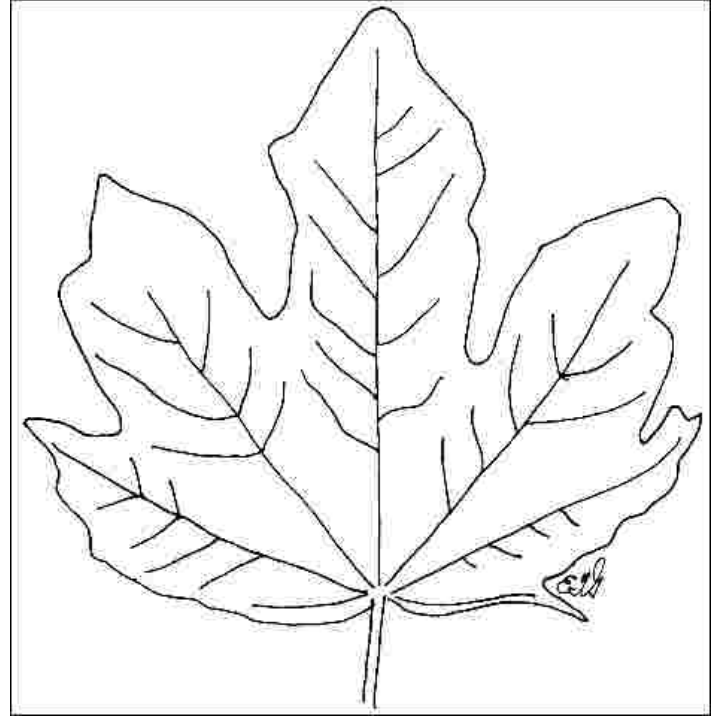


Figure 3. Foliage

## Use and Management

The tree excels in its ability to tolerate dry, alkaline soil but some protection from open winds is helpful. Not for highly compacted soil. It is well-suited for and looks great during drought in a partially shaded location or on the north side of a building. The common name alludes to the plants tolerance of severe pruning, and it will make a dense, tall screen, whether pruned or not. Branches are arranged closely on the trunk and some pruning is usually desirable to create a well-formed tree. The main ornamental feature is the bright yellow fall color. There appears to be variability in color from one year to the next and from tree to tree. Prune early in the life of the tree to develop several major branches well-spaced along a central trunk. This will improve the durability of the tree compared to trees with many upright and spreading branches originating from one point on the trunk.

'Evelyn' may be more vigorous, has an upright branching habit but is cold tolerant only to USDA hardiness zone 6. 'Compactum' is dwarf, 'Postelense' has golden leaves; 'Queen Elizabeth' is more upright-formed than the species and makes a good street tree.

Tar spot and a variety of leaf spots cause some concern among homeowners but are rarely serious enough for control.

## Pests

Pests are usually not serious, but there are some potential problems.

Leaf stalk borer and petiole-borer cause the same type of injury. Both insects bore into the leaf stalk just below the leaf blade. The leaf stalk shrivels, turns black, and the leaf blade falls off. The leaf drop may appear heavy but serious injury to a healthy tree is rare.

Aphids infest maples, usually norway maple, and may be numerous at times. High populations can cause leaf drop. Another sign of heavy aphid infestation is honey dew on lower leaves and objects beneath the tree. Aphids are controlled by spraying or they may be left alone. If not sprayed, predatory insects will usually bring the aphid population under control.

Scales are an occasional problem on maples. Perhaps the most common is cottony maple scale. The insect forms a cottony mass on the lower sides of branches. Scales are controlled with horticultural oil sprays. Scales may also be controlled with other well-timed sprays to kill the crawlers.

If borers become a problem it is an indication the tree is not growing well. Controlling borers involves keeping trees healthy. Chemical controls of existing infestations are more difficult. Proper control involves identification of the borer infesting the tree then applying insecticides at the proper time.

## Diseases

Verticillium wilt symptoms are wilting and death of branches. Infected sapwood will be stained a dark or olive green but staining can't always be found. If staining can not be found do not assume the problem is not verticillium wilt. Severely infected trees probably can't be saved. Lightly infected trees showing only a few wilted branches may be pulled through. Fertilize and prune lightly infected trees. This treatment will not cure the problem but may allow the tree to outgrow the infection. Girdling roots will cause symptoms which mimic verticillium wilt.