

Norway Maple

(*Acer platanoides*)

Homeowners Fact Sheet

Tips for identifying, controlling, and monitoring Norway maple on your property

Background

Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) is a tree that is native to Europe and Asia. It was first introduced to the United States in 1756 by John Bartram of Philadelphia as a street and ornamental tree. It is now one of the most common street/shade trees in the U.S. It is a fast-growing tree that is tolerant of full sun to shade, many soil types, and pollution. Several cultivars are also considered invasive.

Why Should You Care?

Norway maple leafs out early and creates dense shade that displaces native herbs, shrubs, and trees in regional habitats that are important to native animals for food and shelter. Its shallow root system also competes with native plants. The milky sap found in its leaves gums up native insect mouth parts so they cannot eat its leaves. It produces many seeds early in the year that are wind dispersed and invade forests and forest edges.



Five lobed leaf
(Photo taken by Jan Samanek, State Phytosanitary Administration, www.bugwood.org)



Golden yellow autumn foliage (Photo taken by L. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, www.bugwood.org)



Winged samaras joined in a straight line. (Photo taken Paul Wray, IA State University, www.bugwood.org)

Identification

- Perennial tree that leafs out earlier than native trees.
- It is one of the last trees to change color in autumn; leaves turn golden yellow in autumn and then fall
- Grows 40-90 feet tall
- Paired leaves are dark green, 5"-7" with 5 lobes
- Has milky white sap in leaves, petioles, and young twigs; test by pulling a leaf off a twig
- Non-native *Acer truncatum* (Purpleblow Maple, eastern Asia) is very similar and the only other hardy maple that has milky sap. It has not yet been reported as escaped or invasive but it has potential.
- Oval or rounded crown with central leader
- Bark is grey with shallow, regular grooves
- In spring the tree is covered with small, rounded clusters of yellow-green flowers before the leaves emerge (April to May)
- Cultivars 'Crimson King' and 'Schwedleri' have dark purple autumn foliage, 'Drummondii' has variegated leaves, and 'Emerald Queen' has light green leaves.
- Fruits mature into paired winged samaras (wings join along a straight line) with seeds

Some Suggested Prevention and Control Methods

Do not plant Norway maple or any cultivars including 'Crimson King,' 'Schwedleri,' 'Emerald Queen,' 'Drummondii,' 'Dissectum,' 'Lorbergii,' 'Columnare,' and 'Pendulum' due to the potential for cross-fertilization between two 'sterile' cultivars. Replace these trees with recommended alternatives.

Mechanical Small infestations of seedlings and shallow-rooted plants can be hand-pulled when the soil is moist, but take care to remove the entire plant including all the root portions to prevent regrowth. Always wear gloves and long sleeves to protect your skin from poison ivy and barbed or spined plants.

Although this species doesn't normally spread by root sprouts, when the top is removed this species may sprout from surface roots.

Chemical

Foliar application 2% glyphosate or 1.5% triclopyr solution can be applied to leaves and green stems of trees in small thickets during late summer – early autumn. Apply enough herbicide to wet the leaves, but not have dripping. To allow for ample drying, applications should be made when rain is unlikely for about 12 hours after application and leaves should be dry prior to treatment. Wind speed should be below 8-10 mph to avoid off-site drift to non-target plants.

Basal bark application is one of the easier methods available, does not require any cutting, and uses a small amount of herbicide mix. It works best during late winter/early spring (February 15 - April 15). The base of the tree must be free of snow, ice, or water on the bark from recent rainfall before application; precipitation after application has no effect.

Mix a 20% concentration of oil-soluble triclopyr and 80% oil (mineral oil or vegetable oils). Add dye to the mixture to keep track of treated plants. Another option is to use a premixed, ready-to-use triclopyr product designed for basal bark application. Using a handheld or backpack sprayer, apply the mixture in a 12-inch wide band around the entire circumference of the tree base with no "skips." The basal bark method is generally used for trees that are less than 6 inches in diameter, though slightly larger stems may also be treated effectively by thoroughly treating bark up to 24 inches in height. Follow-up foliar application to basal sprouts and root suckers may be necessary.

Combination of chemical and mechanical

Trees that are greater than 6 inches in diameter may need to be cut down and stumps treated with a glyphosate or triclopyr-based herbicides. We recommend getting professional help with trees of this size!

Follow-up

When Norway maple is removed from the site fill that space with native or non-invasive plants by seeding or planting. Attractive native trees and shrubs are available that provide nectar, seed, and host plant material for butterflies, hummingbirds, and other wildlife. Alternatives include sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), red chokeberry (*Aronia arbutifolia*), black chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*), large fothergilla (*Fothergilla major*), Fothergilla 'Mt. Airy,' and 'Blue Shadow' (cultivars), Virginia sweetpire (*Itea virginica*), blackhaw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), and shining sumac (*Rhus copallinum*). Alternatives can also be found at <http://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-and-plant-finder/using-tree-and-plant-finder>

Precautions

- Herbicidal contact with desirable plants should always be avoided. If native grasses are intermingled with the Norway maple, triclopyr should be used because it is selective for broad-leaved plants and will not harm grasses.
- Because triclopyr amine is a water-soluble salt that can cause severe eye damage, it is imperative that you wear protective goggles to protect yourself from splashes. Triclopyr ester is soluble in oil or water, is highly volatile, and can be extremely toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates. It should not be used in or near water sources or wetlands and should only be applied under cool, dry, and low wind conditions. Do not use when the temperature is higher than 85°F
- If using herbicide, be sure to follow all label instructions.

Equipment & Supplies You May Need

Herbicide (glyphosate or triclopyr)

Rubber gloves and appropriate eye protection

Long pants, long sleeved shirt, socks, closed-toe shoes

Spray bottle or backpack sprayer and liquid dye (food coloring or Rit dye works)

Patience, persistence, and commitment (this will take years)

Additional Resources

Introduced Species Summary Project, Columbia University
http://www.columbia.edu/itc/cerc/danoff-burg/invasion_bio/inv_spp_summ/Acer_platanoides.html

Midwest Invasive Plant Network Control Database

<http://mipncontroldatabase.wisc.edu/>

Northeast Illinois Invasive Plant Partnership www.niipp.net

