

Acer rubrum



red maple

Family *Aceraceae*

Origin Native

WIS Code FAC CoC 3

DESCRIPTION

Tree to 40 m tall. Young trunks and branches have smooth gray bark turning darker and furrowed with age, and twigs are smooth, brown to reddish with rounded winter buds. Leaves are simple, opposite (5 to 15 cm long) with three to five lobes and coarsely toothed margins, turning red in fall. Upper leaf surfaces are smooth, and the lower surface is often sparsely or velvety hairy on main veins that radiate from the long red leaf stalk.

FLOWERS AND FRUITS

March through May. Flowers clustered at branch tips before leaves appear, with male and female flowers on separate trees or on separate branches of the same tree. Flowers are bright red, nearly sessile (attached to branches) with two to six flowers per rounded cluster. Fruits are red paired winged seeds (samaras), 1.5 to 2.5 cm long on elongated drooping red stalks.

HABITAT

Moist woodlands, floodplain forests, swamps, depression wetlands, wooded slopes.

SIMILAR SPECIES

Acer saccharum, sugar maple, has pointed tips on its winter buds (not round-tipped), the leaf margins lack the serrated teeth between lobes, and both flowers and samaras of sugar maple are green (not red).



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Leaves



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Leaves, fall



© C.E. Austin

Bark



© Arthur Haines

Flower



© Frank Bramley

Fruit



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A. rubrum



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A. saccharum