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# Maple

*Acer* spp.

Family: Aceraceae

Maple (*Acer* spp.) contains about 120 species native to Asia [16], North America [13], Mexico and Guatemala [1], and the European/Mediterranean region [6], with the rest in Eurasia, Malaysia and northern Africa. The Maples can be separated into two groups based on the ray widths of their microscopic anatomy, the soft maple group and the hard maple group. Species within each group look alike microscopically. *Acer* is the classical Latin name of maple.

*Acer barbatum*- hammock maple, **Florida maple**, southern sugar maple, sugar maple

*Acer circinatum*- **vine maple**, mountain maple

*Acer glabrum*-bark maple, California mountain maple, Douglas maple, dwarf maple, mountain maple, New Mexico maple, **rocky mountain maple**, shrubby maple, sierra maple, soft maple

*Acer grandidentatum*- bigtooth maple, **canyon maple**, hard maple, large-toothed maple, sugar maple, ultravioletaldehyde bigtooth maple, western sugar maple

*Acer leucoderm*-**chalk maple**, palebark maple, sugar maple, whitebark maple

*Acer macrophyllum*\*- big-leaf, **bigleaf maple**, broadleaf maple, broadleaved maple, bugleaf maple, Californian maple, Oregon maple, pacific maple, white maple

*Acer negundo*\*-?ash maple, ashleaf maple, black ash, **boxelder**, boxelder maple, California boxelder, cut-leaved maple, inland boxelder, manitoba maple, negundo maple, red river maple, stinking ash, sugar ash, three-leaved maple, western boxelder

*Acer nigrum*\*- **black maple**, black sugar maple, hard maple, rock maple, sugar maple, white maple

*Acer pennsylvanicum*- buckwood, goose-foot maple, moosewood, mountain alder, northern maple, Pennsylvanian maple, striped dogwood, **striped maple**, whistletree

*Acer rubrum*\*-?Carolina red maple, drummond maple, drummond red maple, Oregon maple, **red maple**, scarlet maple, shoe-peg maple, silver maple, soft maple, southern soft maple, swamp maple, three-pointed-leaf maple, three-toothed red maple, water maple, white maple

*Acer saccharinum*\*- creek maple, papascowood, river maple, **silver maple**, silverleaf maple, soft maple, swamp maple, water maple, white maple

*Acer saccharum*\*- bird's-eye maple, black maple, curly maple, hard maple, rock maple, rough maple, sugar, **sugar maple**, sugar-tree, sweet maple, thumb-nail maple

*Acer spicatum*-?goose-foot maple, low maple, moose maple, **mountain maple**, mountain maple-bush, spiked maple, water maple

## The Tree

Maples grow to heights of 120 ft (36 m), with a diameter of 3 ft (1 m). Forest grown trees may have a clear bole of 60 ft (18 m).

## The Wood

### General

Maple lumber comes principally from the Middle Atlantic and Lake States, which together account for about two-thirds of the production. The wood of sugar maple and black maple is known as hard maple; that of silver maple, red maple, and boxelder as soft maple. The sapwood of the maples is commonly white with a slight reddish-brown tinge; the heartwood is light reddish brown, but sometimes is considerably darker. The sapwood is from 3 to 5+ inches (76 to 127+ mm) thick.

Hard maple has a fine, uniform texture, turns well on a lathe, is resistant to abrasion and has no characteristic odor or taste. It is heavy, strong, stiff, hard, and resistant to shock, and it has large shrinkage. Sugar maple is generally straight grained but the grain also occurs as "birds-eye," "curly," and "fiddleback" grain.

The wood of soft maples resembles that of hard maples but is not as heavy, hard and strong, the better grade of soft maple has been substituted for hard maple in furniture. The sapwood in the soft maples is considerably wider than that in the hard maples and has a lighter heartwood color.

Maple lumber sometimes has olive or greenish black discolored areas known as mineral streak or mineral stain, which may be due to injury. Maple wood stains well and takes a high polish. It is intermediate in gluing and has low decay resistance.

Working Properties: The wood turns well, is harder to work than softer woods, and has high nail-holding ability. It stains and polishes well, but is intermediate in gluing.

Durability: Rated as slightly or nonresistant to heartwood decay.

Preservation: Moderately resistant to penetration with preservatives.

Uses: : Lumber, distillation, veneer, crossties, paper pulp, flooring, furniture, pallets, boxes and crates, shoe lasts, handles, woodenware, novelties, spools and bobbins, bowling alleys, dance floors, piano frames, bowling pins, cutting blocks, pulpwood and turnery.

Toxicity: May cause allergic bronchial asthma, dermatitis and rhinitis (40).