



Sugar Maple

Acer saccharum

Height: 20 m

Spread: 15-20 m

Native to: Eastern North America

Grows in: Parks, forests and ravines

Friends with: Often grows with Basswood and Red Oak

Sugar Maple: Sweet and Brilliant

- Sugar Maple trees are a main source of maple syrup because their sap has one of the highest natural sugar contents of any Maple species. Their scientific name is *Acer saccharum*; “saccharum” means “sugar.”
- Sugar Maple grows best in cool climates and likes shade.
- Sugar Maples are “keystone” species in some forests, meaning their presence strongly shapes the entire ecosystem around them.

How to Identify

- Bark on young trees is grey and smooth, aging to dark grey with vertical ridges that curl along one side.
- Buds are dark brown, narrow and cone-shaped and may have faintly hairy scales.
- Leaves have three to five lobes, are edged with wavy teeth, and are slightly hairy underneath. They turn glowing yellows, oranges and deep reds in the fall.

Can you count the lobes on this Sugar Maple leaf?



Flowers and Seeds

- In spring, drooping clusters of yellow-green flowers that look like tassels appear. Early flowers support pollinators when few other plants are blooming.
- Seeds are encased in a papery covering with long, flat wings. As the seeds fall to the ground, the wings make them spin like helicopters.

Traditional and Historical Uses

- Anishinaabe people have referred to Sugar Maple as the “leader” because it is the first tree to show signs of growth in the spring.
- Beyond using the sap to make maple syrup and sugar, the hard, durable wood has traditionally been used for making bows and arrows and everyday tools, as well as for woodworking, furniture making and firewood.



Sugar Maple seeds
with wings and leaves

Toronto's Urban Forest

- Toronto's urban forest includes trees, shrubs and plants that help keep Toronto healthy, vibrant and full of life.
- These leafy companions support local wildlife, help many plants and animals live and grow, and protect our neighbourhoods from noise and rain.
- Trees clean the air we breathe and create shady places to gather, play and explore.



Vote Sugar Maple for Tree of the Year!

Kids can vote for Toronto's 2027 Tree of the Year during Kids Vote Weekend, taking place at all 50 advance voting places on October 10 and 11.

By participating, kids will learn about the voting process and help support the City's goal of reaching a 40% tree canopy by 2050.



Fun Facts:

- Sugar Maple is famous for its extra sweet sap – pass the pancakes!
- Sugar Maple seeds spin like little helicopters as they fall to the ground.
- In the fall, Sugar Maple puts on a colourful show with orange, red and yellow leaves.