



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

Common Name: Big leaf maple
Scientific Name: *Acer macrophyllum*
Plant Family: Aceraceae

Identifying Characteristics:

Size: Long-lived medium to large trees that reach up to 30 m (100 ft) in height with a trunk up to 76 cm (30 in) in diameter. Its usual height is 5 to 30 m (16 to 100 ft).

Leaves: Leaves are simple, opposite, shiny dark green, and large: 15 to 30 cm (6 to 12 in) long and borne on long petioles (5 to 12 cm long, or 2 to 5 in) that attach them to the stem. The leaves are deeply lobed, and the margins are usually undulating or with shallow lobes.

Flowers: The separate male and female trees have sweetly fragrant flowers. They are creamy white colored and bean-like arranged in a pyramidal spike. The flower clusters are 10 to 20 cm (4 to 8 in) long and the individual flowers have five petals.

Bark: On young stems and twigs, the surface is smooth and gray to brown, becoming red-brown with age. Older branches have deeply fissured bark, which eventually fragments into separate scales.

Habitat: Big leaf maple is most common in coarse and gravelly soils in dry to somewhat moist habitats. It is most abundant near the borders of low-elevation mountain streams and in river bottoms.

Bloom time: Late spring

Information source:
The Jepson Manual. 1993. University of California Press

Did you know? The inner bark of Big Leaf maple used to be dried and ground up into a powder that was used to thicken soups, just as we sometimes use cornstarch or flour to thicken soups and stews today.



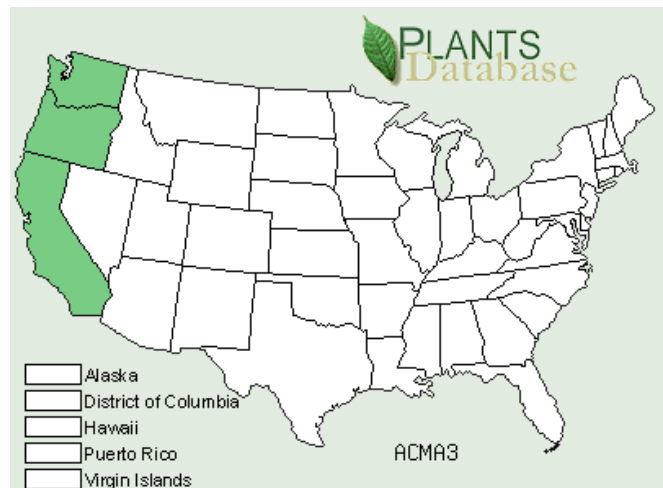
Photograph by J.S. Peterson, USDA NRCS NPDC, USA, CA, Sacramento, Goethe Arboretum, June 3, 2003



Photograph by Susan McDougall, The Flora of Mt. Adams, USA, WA, Tacoma, June 2003

Phenological observation:
Budburst/First Leaf, First Flower, Seed or Fruit Dispersal

Distribution Area:



Map courtesy of USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database (plants.usda.gov)