



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



www.budburst.org

Common Name: Red Maple
Scientific Name: *Acer rubrum*
Plant Family: Aceraceae



Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org)



© William S. Justice

Photograph by William S. Justice @ USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Phenological observation:

Budburst/First Leaf, Full Leaf, First Flower, Full Flower, End of Flower, Seed Dispersal

Identifying Characteristics:

Size: Small to medium-sized deciduous tree 9 to 27 meters (30 to 90 feet) tall.

Leaves: The leaves are opposite, simple, 3 to 5 palmate lobes with toothed (serrated) edges. They are 5 to 10 cm (2 – 4 inches) long. In the spring, the leaves are red-tinged. In the summer, they are green above and whitened and sometimes finely hairy underneath. In the fall, they are bright red (hence their name). Twigs are also red with red buds.

Flowers: Small reddish to yellowish flowers on slender stalks with petals which appear before leaf budburst. First flower is defined as when male flowers are fully open and pollen is present. End flower is when 95% of the male flowers don't have pollen. Most trees have both male and female flowers (usually on separate branches) but occasionally trees only produce female flowers. Try to find trees that have male flowers.

Fruits: A double samara ("helicopter") with wings that angle downward. Seed dispersal is defined as when the fruits turn brown and start falling, which usually occurs before leaves are fully developed, April through July (depending on elevation).

Bark: Smooth and light gray on young trees becoming darker with age and becoming furrowed into long, narrow, scaly ridges on older trunks and branches.

Habitat: Red maple is one of the most common trees in the Midwest and East. It is often found in swamps and on moist soils, but can also thrive in drier habitats

Bloom time: Red maples are one of the first trees to flower in spring, usually March-April.



Project BudBurst

A National Phenology Network Field Campaign for Citizen Scientists



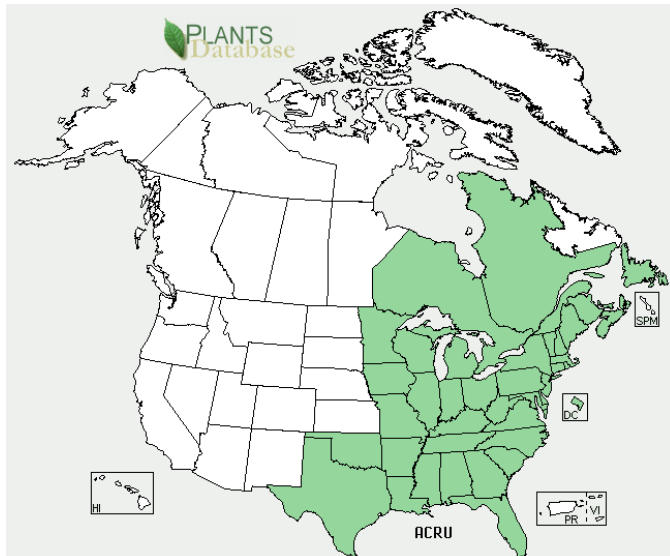
www.budburst.org

Information sources:

USDA (plants.usda.gov/plantguide)

Did you know? Because of its brilliant red color in the fall, Red maple is prized as an ornamental. The sap can be used for producing maple syrup, however its sap has only about half of the sugar content as sugar maple. Native Americans used red maple bark as an analgesic, wash for inflamed eyes and cataracts, and as a remedy for hives and muscular aches.

Distribution Area:



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