

Ginkgo

Ginkgo biloba

Maidenhair Tree

A native of China, Ginkgo is highly valued for its beauty, edible nuts, and medicinal qualities. A fine ornamental, Ginkgo has unusual perpendicular branches and striking yellow foliage in autumn. Female trees bear abundant fruits, the nutty flavored seeds of which are prized in Asia, but not well known in the US. As an ornamental, avoid the female tree as the fleshy pulp of the fruit is messy and unpleasant smelling. Young trees are usually quite open, but fills in to form a denser canopy with time. Ginkgo is very forgiving of soils and even tolerates compacted sites. Ginkgo is derived from the Japanese "ginkyo," meaning silver apricot.



Identification

Leaves

Deciduous, simple, alternate, distinctively fan shaped, 2-4 inches across borne in clusters of 3-5. Green turning yellow in the autumn.



Bark/Wood

Bark is light brown to brownish-gray, deeply furrowed and ridged on older trees and has a corky texture. Wood is yellowish.



Flower/Fruit

Dioecious; male and female trees. Green, spring flowering, inconspicuous. Fruit is round to oval, 1-3", green turning yellow, fleshy pulp with hard nutlike seed.



Form

Narrow and upright with strongly perpendicular branches. Some branches may compete for apical dominance. Broad, round form in open.



Uses

Widely grown as a landscape specimen or street tree. Less widely grown for production of edible nuts. Used for bonsai. Extracts used as memory booster and other homeopathic remedies.

Ethnobotany

Extract of Ginkgo leaves contains terpenoids that have culturally and historically been used to enhance memory and blood flow. It is currently commonly added to soft drinks, energy bars, and vitamin supplements.

Native Distribution

China.

Establishment

Ginkgo is initially very slow growing with growth rate increasing with age.

Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size 75'Hx60'Wx2'dbh
 USDA Zone 3-8
 Light Requirements Full Sun

Soils Diverse
 Drought Tolerant? Yes
 Inundation Tolerant? Moderate

Pests/Damaging Agents

Ginkgo is considered pest free and even resistant to gypsy moth.

Similar Species

Propagation

Seed.

Source(s)

Seed collected from Oregon State University campus, OR.