

Striped Maple

Acer pensylvanicum

Moosewood

Striped Maple, named for the prominent white, lengthwise stripes along the trunk, is a small tree or large shrub. It grows best in shaded and cool northern slopes of upland valleys or as an understory tree. Striped Maple is very slow growing. It is a very important browse plant for wildlife. It is rarely planted as an ornamental in shady gardens. Sex expression is highly variable; a tree may be male, female, or monoecious. And the same tree may even change expression year to year! Striped Maple can become the dominant vegetation after logging. The wood is white and fine grained and has on occasion been used by cabinet makers for inlay materials. An active antitumor substance has been isolated from Striped Maple and tests are underway to determine its practical application.



Identification

Leaves

Deciduous, opposite, serrulate, 3-lobed, resembles goose foot, green above, pale below.



Flower/Fruit

Polygamo-dioecious; yellow, appearing in long clusters in May to June. Paired, wide spreading samaras, 1" long, in hanging clusters, June to September.



Bark/Wood

When young, smooth gray-green with prominent white lengthwise stripes, older bark becomes reddish brown.



Form

Small tree (to 30' tall) or large shrub. Trees over 20 feet tall are rare.



Uses

Probably the most important use is for wildlife food. It is one of the preferred species for rabbits and is frequently eaten by porcupines. Provides browse for deer. Occasionally used in gardens and as ornamental.

Ethnobotany

Early settlers fed both dried and fresh leaves to their cattle during the winter. Their horses and cows browsed the young shoots in spring. Native Americans used the inner bark for medicine preparations.

Native Distribution

Northeastern quarter of the United States from Nova Scotia westward to Lake Erie.

Establishment

Requires some shade.

Growing Conditions and Culture

Mature Size

USDA Zone

Light Requirements

3-7

Full to Part Shade

Soils

Drought Tolerant?

Inundation Tolerant?

Diverse

No

Moderate

Pests/Damaging Agents

Verticillium wilt can be damaging. Generally relatively free from insect attack.

Similar Species

Propagation

Seed - cold stratify. Scarification sometimes required. Layering.

Source(s)

Orion Farms, Philadelphia, NY.