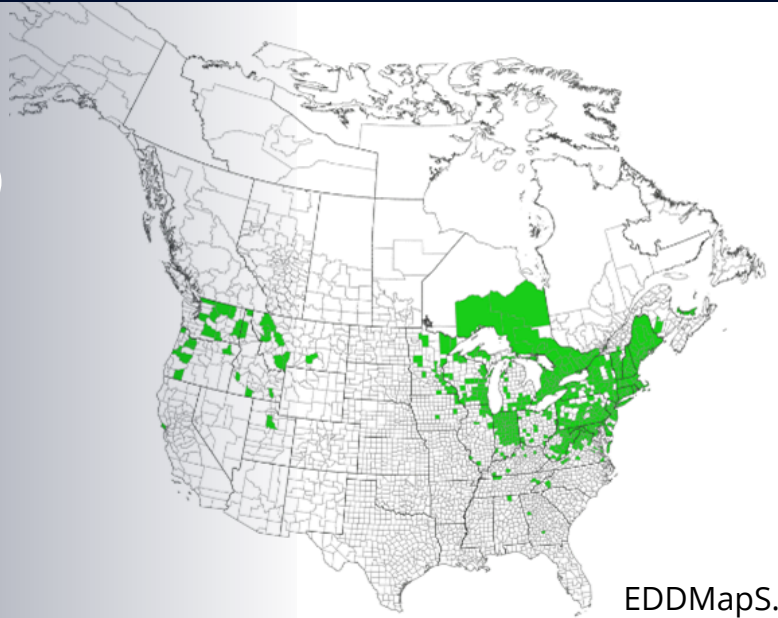


# NORWAY MAPLE

## *(Acer platanoides)*

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EDDMapS.org

This fact sheet covers identification and management of Norway maple, an invasive plant that damages our environment by displacing native species and reducing biodiversity.

### Identifying Features

#### OVERVIEW:

Broad-canopied deciduous tree. Mature trees typically reach 40-90 ft in height, with a dense, rounded and symmetrical canopy supported by upward spreading branches (Figure 1).

#### LEAVES

Opposite, dark green, and usually 4-7 inches across with 5-7 lobes (Figure 2). Cultivars such as 'Crimson King' have deep red or purple foliage. The leaf petioles exude a white sap when broken, which distinguishes it from native maples (Figure 3). Leaves turn yellow in fall and often persist longer than those of native maples.

#### STEMS

Twigs are stout, brown, and glabrous (Figure 4), with rounded green buds protected by overlapping scales. Young bark is smooth and gray-brown, becoming darker and furrowed with age (Figure 5).

#### FLOWERS/FRUIT

Small, yellow-green flowers appear before leaves in spring, ranging from late April to early June depending on climate. Paired, winged seeds (samaras) develop early and mature by late summer (Figure 6). The winged seeds of Norway maple lie flat at 180°, while samaras of sugar maple and other native maples droop to form a horseshoe shape (45°-90°).



Figure 1) Growth habit - mature plant (photo by Alyssa Siegel-Miles).



Figure 2) Foliage (photo by Alyssa Siegel-Miles).

**ROOTS**

Shallow, vigorous, wide-spreading roots compete aggressively with understory vegetation and turfgrass. Roots often damage sidewalks in urban sites.

**REPRODUCTION/SPREAD**

Samaras are dispersed widely by wind and germinate readily, even in shaded conditions, enabling rapid colonization of forest edges and interiors.

**Habitat**

Thrives in varied, diverse environments tolerates shade, drought, soil compaction, and pollution. Commonly invades and thrives in managed landscapes, transmission line right-of-ways, meadows, woodlands and forest edges; also penetrates mature established habitats, including forest interiors.

**Control**

Effective management requires consistent follow-up and monitoring.

**Mechanical Control**

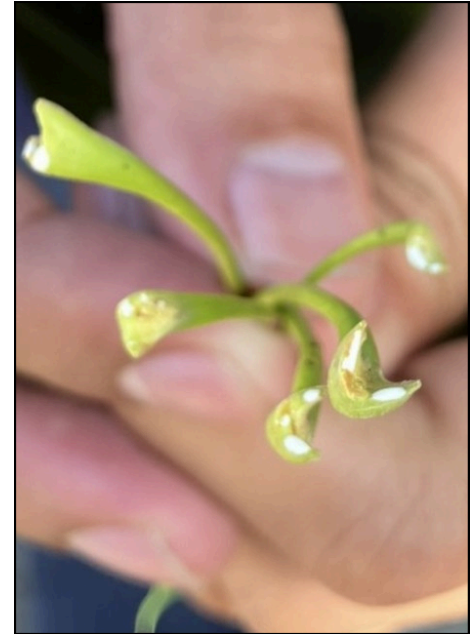
Hand-pulling/digging: Suitable for seedlings or small plants. Best done when the soil is moist. Be sure to remove the entire root system. Use tools such as weed wrenches to ease removal of medium-sized plants.

**Hand-Pulling/Digging**

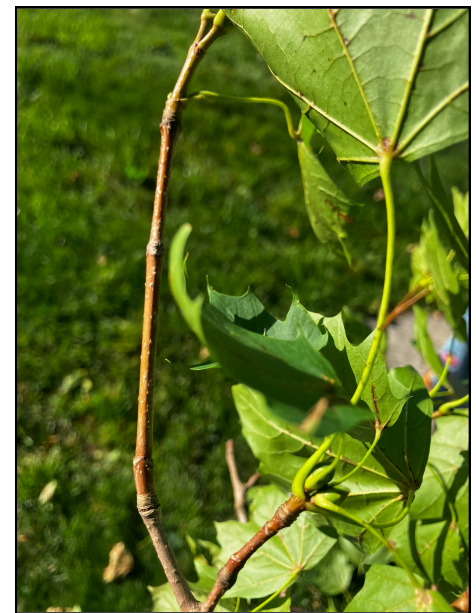
Suitable for seedlings or small plants. Best done when the soil is moist. Be sure to remove the entire root system. Use tools such as weed wrenches to ease removal of medium-sized plants.

**Cutting/girdling**

To girdle a tree, make a complete cut around the trunk about 6 inches above ground level, removing both the bark and cambium layer. Girdling is most effective in spring, when sap is rising, or in mid to late summer, when nutrients are moving downward to the roots. Cutting or girdling of larger trees can be effective but resprouting often occurs and the action must be repeated.



*Figure 3) Characteristic milky sap of Norway maple exuding from petiole after leaf cut (photo by Carla Caballero).*



*Figure 4) Brown young twigs (photo by Carla Caballero).*

**Chemical Control**

Follow product label directions when applying all chemical treatments. Trees taller than 15 ft may require treatment by a certified arborist or licensed professional pesticide applicator, as specialized equipment and credentials are often required for safe and legal application.

**Cut stump**

In fall or early winter, cut stems near ground level and apply systemic herbicide directly into fresh cuts or girdles within minutes after cutting. Resprouts must be cut and retreated. Effective herbicides include glyphosate and triclopyr. Treatments remain effective down to 50 °F.

**Hack-and-squirt**

Practical and efficient when Norway maple is growing close to desirable trees. Use a hand axe to make downward-angled cuts around the tree stem to reach the cambium or growing layer. Apply systemic herbicide (glyphosate or triclopyr) immediately to the wounded stem after cutting. This treatment is most effective from middle to late summer.

**Foliar Spray**

Apply glyphosate to the surfaces of leaves in late summer through fall. Since Norway maple retains foliage after many native plants have dropped theirs, this timing helps reduce harm to non-target species. Use proper equipment to avoid misapplication of product onto applicator and neighboring plants. Applicators should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Important:** Monitor treated trees during the following growing season to ensure successful control and repeat treatment as needed.

**Distribution**

Common in urban landscapes and along roadsides; increasingly invading undisturbed forests and woodlands. Norway maple is now widespread across the Northeast and Midwest, with established populations in the Pacific Northwest and California.

**Background and Native Alternatives**

Native to continental Europe and western Asia. Brought to the U.S. in the mid-1700s and widely planted as a street tree in the 1800s. Horticultural interest in the species increased after Chestnut blight and Dutch elm disease reduced urban tree populations. More than 100 cultivars have been developed.

Sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*) and red maple (*Acer rubrum*) are recommended native alternatives.



Figure 5) Furrowed bark of a mature tree (photo by Carla Caballero).



Figure 6) Horizontal samaras at 180° (photo by Carla Caballero).

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