

SILVER MAPLE

Acer saccharinum L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Soft maple, River maple, White maple, Silverleaf maple.

FORM: A tree usually 50-80 feet high, may attain a height of 120 feet with a diameter of 3-4 1/2 feet, trunk usually short, dividing 10-15 feet above the ground into stout ascending branches which divide freely, ultimately forming a broad rounded crown, lateral branches usually have a pronounced droop, with an upward curve at the end.

BARK: On branches and trunks of small trees smooth and gray; on old trunks brown with somewhat furrowed surface which separates into flakes which are attached at the center and loose at both ends.

TWIGS: Somewhat slender, at first green, later chestnut-brown and covered with numerous lenticels.

LEAVES: Opposite, simple, almost circular in outline, deeply 5-lobed, coarsely toothed, upper surface bright green, lower silvery-white; borne on slender drooping petioles 4-5 inches long; leaves 6-7 inches and nearly as broad.

FLOWERS: Appear before the leaves in dense axillary clusters on the growth of the preceding season; the staminate and pistillate in separate clusters on the same tree or on different trees, calyx tubular in the staminate flower; urn-shaped in the pistillate flower, corolla lacking.

FRUIT: With 2 widely divergent wings, borne on slender drooping stalks; wings 1-2 inches long, straight or curved; seeds 1/2 inch long with a pale reddish-brown coat; they sprout soon after falling to the ground.

WINTER BUDS: Opposite, red, blunt-pointed, may be short-stalked.

WOOD: Hard, close-grained, brittle, easily worked, heartwood pale brown, sapwood white.

USES: Landscaping. Historical uses: Cheap furniture, flooring.

HABITAT: Prefers a moist, deep soil such as found along streams.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves with lower surface silvery-white; broken twigs have a pungent odor; the outer branches have a pronounced droop and an upward curve; bark somewhat furrowed and separates into thin flakes that are loose at both ends.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: Throughout the state.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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| 1. A branch with staminate flowers | 7. A fruiting branch |
| 2. A branch with pistillate flowers | 8. Vertical section of a samara |
| 3. A staminate flower | 9. Vertical section of a seed |
| 4. A pistillate flower | 10. An embryo |
| 5. A pistil | 11. An embryo displayed |
| 6. Vertical section of a pistillate flower | 12. A winter branchlet |



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