



## RED MAPLE *Acer rubrum* L.



**R**ed maple—also known as soft, white or swamp maple—occurs throughout the state. A rapid grower and the most abundant of the maples, it is typically found in swamps and poorly drained sites, but also occurs elsewhere. The red maple is a medium-sized, slender tree that becomes 50–60 feet high, and 1–2 feet in diameter. The branches are upright, forming a somewhat narrow head. Usually the trunk is not divided.

The **bark** on young trees is smooth and light gray. On old trunks, it is dark gray, ridged and broken into plate-like scales.





*Red maples produce bright red flowers followed by abundant seeds in the springtime.*

The **leaves** are opposite, 3–5 inches long, with 3–5 lobes and margins that are irregularly double-toothed. The upper surface is light green; lower surface is white. The sides of the terminal lobe converge toward the tip; and the notches between lobes are V-shaped. In fall, the leaves turn scarlet and orange.

The **flowers** are produced in clusters on stalks before leaf buds open. Males are yellowish-red while females are bright scarlet. The red maple is one of the first trees to flower in spring.

The **fruit** is winged, ripens in spring or early summer, and germinates as soon as it falls. Wings are only slightly divergent, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch long. The seed body lacks a depression.

The **twigs** are straight, stiff, do not have a rank odor when broken, and are red on both surfaces. Buds are red and often clustered.

The **wood** is close-grained, heavy, moderately strong, easily worked but not durable, although it will take a good polish. It is used mainly for pulp and firewood, but also for pallets, furniture stock, canoe paddles and turnery products. As sugar maple becomes more expensive, more mills are using red maple. It is also commonly used for landscape plantings.

MAINE REGISTER OF  
BIG TREES 2008  
Red Maple Circumference: 183" Height: 69'  
Crown Spread: 67' Location: Richmond

