

## Norway maple, *Acer platanoides*



**Above:** Norway maple in a parking lot.

**Left:** RT 7 New Milford 11/12/20. Norway maple trees with gold maple-style leaves in full fall color.

**Look for Norway maples this week.** The glowing yellow fall color is easy to spot now that our native maples have dropped their leaves. **Check them out soon** – the leaves are falling fast!

You may see them anywhere in town. Below are some of the more impressive infestations.

- Route 7 just south of the intersection with the southern end of Squash Hollow Road
- Lower Grove Street especially near Lovers Leap State Park
- Intersection of RT 67, RT 202 and Grove Street
- RT 202 south of Elkington Farm Road

Norway maples have many characteristics that help them thrive. They are shade tolerant, pollution tolerant and not bothered by insect pests. They produce plentiful seeds. They have a longer growing season than most of our native trees, both leafing out early and holding their leaves late. They seed heavily. And the fatal blow: they produce chemicals that prevent other plants from germinating and growing nearby. They outcompete our native trees, which can eventually result in a forest of nothing but Norway maple.

Our native insects don't thrive on Norway maples. I've read that Norway maple forests are eerily quiet, not a friendly place for birds because there are no caterpillars to feed baby birds. In contrast, the many kinds of native maples provide food for native insects, including at least 285 species of moths and butterflies, which in turn are food for native birds and other animals.

Norway maple leaves have a slightly different shape than our common sugar and red maple leaves. I never remember how to tell them apart. Instead, to verify ID in summer, I break off a leaf and squeeze the base of the leaf stem: if the juice is milky, it is Norway maple.

Norway maple was officially listed as invasive in our state when the invasive plant laws went into effect in 2003. Due to its importance in the landscape industry, it was not banned. However, many nurseries and landscapers no longer plant it. The form, 'Crimson King', with maroon-purple leaves, is common as a specimen tree. But don't be fooled: its offspring are mostly just plain ordinary green Norway maples, most easily spotted in the fall.

*For more information, see*

<http://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/GetDocument?docId=1738702&DocName=NorwayMaple.pdf>

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