

Acer pseudoplatanus

COMMON NAME

sycamore

FAMILY

Sapindaceae

AUTHORITY

Acer pseudoplatanus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

ACEPSE

HABITAT

Terrestrial. Coastal and lowland plant on sites with high fertility. Grows in a wide range of open forest and scrub types with moderately high light levels.

FEATURES

Large monoecious, deciduous tree to 20 m high with smooth grey bark. Large 5-lobed leaves up to 20 cm long on slender reddish petioles up to 15 cm long. Small green flowers in dense clusters. Seeds 0.5-1 cm long with distinctive wings up to 4 cm long.

SIMILAR TAXA

A number of exotic maple species are cultivated in NZ. All *Acer* species have the distinctive winged seeds but the combination of 5-lobed leaves (not compound) and the smooth trunk separate *Acer pseudoplatanus* from most other species.

FLOWERING

October, November

FLOWER COLOURS

Green

FRUITING

late summer-early autumn (Timmins & MacKenzie 1995).

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Species is deciduous (Porteus 1993; Timmins & MacKenzie 1995). Seeds germinate synchronously in spring; seed dormancy is broken by chilling (5 degrees Celsius for 6 weeks); seed bank is termed "transient" which probably means that the seeds don't last more than a year (Buddenhagen, C. pers. comm.). Plants are monoecious so some selfing may occur. Seeds produced annually, in bunches up to 40; probably greater than 10,000 seeds per tree. Seed bank transient. Seed dispersed by gravity and by wind (up to 100 metres)

YEAR NATURALISED

1880

ORIGIN

Central and Southern Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental



Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy Rolfe



Sycamore. Photographer: John Barkla

ETYMOLOGY

acer: Thought to be derived from the Latin acer 'hard' or 'sharp', the wood once having been used for writing tablets

TOLERANCES

Highly tolerant to shade (although growth in the shade is slow) and moderately tolerant to drought. Fairly resistant to frost. Resprouting from stumps occurs after any physical damage.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/acer-pseudoplatanus/>