

Acer pseudoplatanus

COMMON NAMES

sycamore

FAMILY

Sapindaceae

AUTHORITY

Acer pseudoplatanus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

ACEPSE

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

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.

WETLAND PLANT INDICATOR STATUS RATING

UPL: Obligate Upland

Rarely is a hydrophyte, almost always in uplands (non-wetlands).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

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



Upper Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 15/12/2001, Licence: CC BY.



Sycamore. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

ORIGIN

Central and Southern Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

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.

ETYMOLOGY

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

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

17 September 2024