

Acer nigrum

[Synonyms : *Acer barbatum* var. *nigrum*, *Acer nigrum* var. *palmeri*, *Acer nigrum* var. *pseudoplatanoides*, *Acer nigrum* forma *pubescens*, *Acer nigrum* forma *villosum*, *Acer palmifolium* var. *nigrum*, *Acer palmifolium* var. *pseudoplatanoides*, *Acer palmifolium* forma *truncatum*, *Acer palmifolium* forma *villosum*, *Acer saccharinum* var. *nigrum*, *Acer saccharophorum* var. *nigrum*, *Acer saccharophorum* forma *palmeri*, *Acer saccharum* subsp. *nigrum*, *Acer saccharum* var. *palmeri*, *Acer saccharum* var. *pseudoplatanoides*, *Acer saccharum* var. *viride*, *Saccharodendron nigrum*]

BLACK MAPLE.is a deciduous tree. Native to eastern and central North America it has small yellow-green flowers and leaves that turn scarlet, orange and yellow in Autumn.

It is also known as Black sugar maple, Hard maple, Rock maple, *Schwarz-Ahorn* (German), Sugar maple, and White maple.

The black maple has often been confused with the sugar maple, *Acer saccharum* (of which some botanists contend black maple is a subspecies). Black maples's bark is said to be darker and the leaves (which can give the impression that they are wilting) are held to be paler beneath and to have less pronounced lobes.

Nigrum means 'black'.

The North American Indian Chippewa tribe used the sweet-tasting sap as a sweetener like that of sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*).

The Chippewa Indians also used the wood to make gambling dice and chose it for their arrows. Some of the Chippewa tribe took a decoction of the inner bark as a cure for diarrhoea.

It is believed to have been introduced to Britain in 1812.

Like that in big leaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), although the sap contains less sugar than some of its well known close relatives, it is still considered to be worth tapping in the early Spring, particularly from the trunks of more northern trees that experience cold winters with the warmer summers of more southern areas. The sap is sometimes made into a soft drink and it is also concentrated to a syrup used to sweeten many foods. The dried, ground inner bark has been used locally as a thickening agent for soups and has been added to cereals in breadmaking.

As with other close relatives, the leaves were thought to have some preservative qualities and were wrapped around apples (*Malus*) and some root crops before storage.

Black maple wood has been used for shipbuilding, in veneering and as plywood, apart from being made into furniture – and burnt as fuel.

Not least for its Autumn colours, black maple has also be grown occasionally as an ornamental on large private lawns and has graced city parks and streets too.

Deer will browse young trees and birds enjoy eating buds and seeds.