**Acer cissifolium**  
Ivy-Leaf Maple¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

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**INTRODUCTION**

Ivy-leaf maple reaches 20 to 30 feet in height and is equally wide, with a broad, rounded, very dense, fine-textured canopy (Fig. 1). The branches have a twisted and contorted growth habit which, along with the smooth, grey bark, creates an attractive winter silhouette. Upper branches are upright, middle ones horizontal and lower branches slightly pendulous. The crown is made up of a large number of finely-divided, small diameter branches with none really dominant.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

Scientific name: *Acer cissifolium*  
Pronunciation: AY-ser siss-ih-FOLE-e-um  
Common name(s): Ivy-Leaf Maple  
Family: Aceraceae  
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8A (Fig. 2)  
Origin: not native to North America  
Uses: Bonsai; container or above-ground planter; hedge; wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); near a deck or patio; narrow tree lawns (3-4 feet wide); specimen; sidewalk cutout (tree pit); residential street tree  
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

**DESCRIPTION**

Height: 15 to 25 feet  
Spread: 20 to 30 feet  
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms

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1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-13, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.
Leaflet venation: pinnate
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous
Leaflet blade length: 2 to 4 inches; less than 2 inches
Leaf color: green
Fall color: red; yellow
Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated
Fruit length: .5 to 1 inch
Fruit covering: dry or hard
Fruit color: brown; green
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: routinely grown with, or trainable to be grown with, multiple trunks; grow mostly upright and will not droop; showy trunk; tree wants to grow with several trunks but can be trained to grow with a single trunk; no thorns
Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure
Breakage: resistant
Current year twig color: green; reddish
Current year twig thickness: thin

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
Drought tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem
Winter interest: tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter
trunk, or winter flowers

**Outstanding tree:** not particularly outstanding

**Invasive potential:** little, if any, potential at this time

**Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** susceptible

**Pest resistance:** no pests are normally seen on the tree

### USE AND MANAGEMENT

The divided leaflets turn muted shades of red and yellow before dropping in fall. Probably best used as a patio tree or specimen, it could be tried as a street tree, particularly in areas where overhead space is restricted such as beneath power lines. It would make a lovely tree for planting on 20 foot centers along an entry driveway to a commercial landscape, or along a suburban street. Set them back from the street 8 to 12 feet if large trucks use the street regularly since the tree loses its attractiveness (just like the callery pears) when lower branches are removed for vehicle clearance. They can be planted closer if the street is residential and predominantly travelled by automobiles.

Ivy-leaf maple prefers a partially shaded location (particularly in the southern part of its range) but will grow well in full sun when grown on well-drained, moist, acid soil. Tolerating drought without leaf scorch except in the driest, sandy soils, ivy-leaf maple appears to be a tough maple deserving greater usage in urban and suburban landscapes.

Propagation is by cuttings.

### Pests and Diseases

It has problems similar to other maples.