Acer leucoderme  
Chalk Maple

INTRODUCTION

This 25 to 30-foot-tall native North American tree is reportedly quite similar to Acer barbatum or Florida Maple and is often seen with multiple trunks (Fig. 1). The chalky white or light gray bark is quite attractive, with the bark on older trees becoming ridged and blackened near the ground. The two to three-inch-diameter, lobed leaves, with fuzzy undersides, give a spectacular display in the fall months, ranging from shimmering yellow to vivid orange and deep red.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: Acer leucoderme  
Pronunciation: AY-ser  loo-koe-DER-mee  
Common name(s): Chalk Maple, Whitebark Maple  
Family: Aceraceae  
USDA hardiness zones: 5B through 8 (Fig. 2)  
Origin: native to North America  
Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (> 6 feet wide); medium-sized tree lawns (4-6 feet wide); recommended for buffer strips around parking lots or for median strip plantings in the highway; near a deck or patio; reclamation plant; shade tree; specimen  
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

DESCRIPTION

Height: 25 to 30 feet  
Spread: 15 to 30 feet  
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more
Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

**Foliage**

Leaf arrangement: opposite/subopposite  
Leaf type: simple  
Leaf margin: lobed; entire  
Leaf shape: star-shaped  
Leaf venation: palmate  
Leaf type and persistence: deciduous  
Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches; 2 to 4 inches  
Leaf color: green  
Fall color: orange; red; yellow  
Fall characteristic: showy

**Flower**

Flower color: green; yellow  
Flower characteristics: inconspicuous and not showy

**Fruit**

Fruit shape: elongated  
Fruit length: 1 to 3 inches  
Fruit covering: dry or hard  
Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; inconspicuous and not showy; no significant litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

Trunk/bark/branches: bark is thin and easily damaged from mechanical impact; 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: brown  
Current year twig thickness: medium

**Culture**

Light requirement: tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in the shade; tree grows in full sun  
Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; slightly alkaline; acidic; occasionally wet; well-drained  
Drought tolerance: high
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 striking white bark makes this Maple well suited for planting as a specimen displayed against a dark background. A row of these Maples planted along a dark glass building wall or other dark structure would get people’s attention. Surprisingly underused, this small Maple is well suited for a variety of sites, including residences.

Chalk Maple grows well in full sun, partial shade, or deep shade, and has a high tolerance for dry soils. The tree is quite popular in the midwest in areas with alkaline soil pH.

Pests and Diseases

No pests or diseases are of major concern.