

# RED MAPLE

## *Acer rubrum* L.

OTHER COMMON NAMES: Swamp maple, Soft maple, Water maple, White maple.

FORM: Usually about 50 feet high with a diameter 1-2 feet, may become 100 feet high with a diameter of 4 feet; in the open the trunk usually 6-10 feet long and branches low down and forms a dense low crown; upper branches are rather upright; lower branches tend to be horizontal and slightly turned upwards at the end.

BARK: On branches and young trunks smooth and gray; on old trunks very dark gray, 1/4-1/2 inch thick, shaggy, roughened into long ridges which peel off in long plates.

TWIGS: Rather slender, bright or dark red, odorless when bruised, lenticels numerous, conspicuous.

LEAVES: Opposite, simple, 3-5 lobed, coarsely toothed, sinuses sharply cut, lobes more or less sharply pointed; mature leaves light green and smooth above, greenish-white and smooth below, 2-6 inches long.

FLOWERS: Appear in advance of the leaves in dense axillary clusters on the growth of the preceding season, scarlet or yellowish-red; the staminate and pistillate in separate clusters on the same or on different trees, calyx deeply five-lobed, petals present.

FRUIT: Matures early; seeds borne in clusters on slender drooping pedicels, wings 1/2-1 inch long; seeds usually sprout soon after falling to the ground.

WINTER BUDS: Red, blunt-pointed, short-stalked, about 1/5 inch long, bud scales rounded, somewhat hairy on the margins.

WOOD: Rather soft, not strong, close-grained; heartwood light brown, with wide light colored sapwood.

USES: Lumber, pulp, firewood, landscaping. Historical uses: furniture, woodenware, turnery.

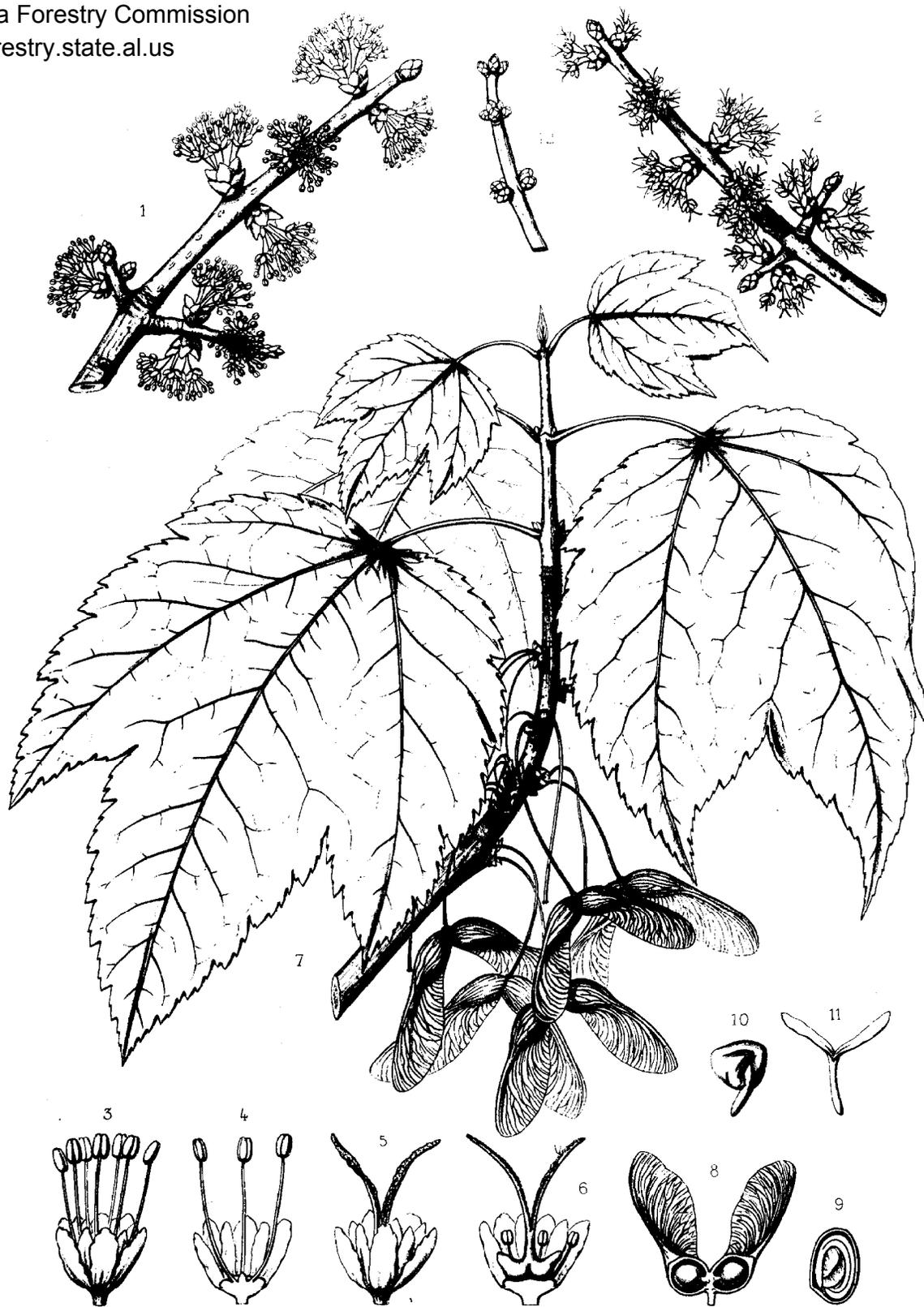
HABITAT: Wet soil along streams and in swamps, also on high ground and hilly areas.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS: Leaves 3-5 lobed and coarsely toothed, rarely silvery-white on the underside; red lustrous twigs and lack of pungent odor when bruised; bark of mature trees somewhat shaggy.

DISTRIBUTION IN ALABAMA: On shady slopes and wet woods throughout the state.

### EXPLANATION OF PLATE

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|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. A branch with staminate flowers         | 7. A fruiting branch           |
| 2. A branch with pistillate flowers        | 8. Vertical section of a fruit |
| 3. A staminate flower                      | 9. Vertical section of a seed  |
| 4. Vertical section of a staminate flower  | 10. An embryo                  |
| 5. A pistillate flower                     | 11. An embryo displayed        |
| 6. Vertical section of a pistillate flower | 12. A winter branchlet         |



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