

Acer monspessulanum

(Montpelier Maple)



Notes

Montpelier Maple can be mistaken for Hedge Maple (*Acer campestre*), however *Acer monspessulanum* does not have the milky sap characteristic.

Above: Detail of bark and foliage

Origin	Family: Sapindaceae. Due to the extensive natural range of Montpelier Maple there are many geographic variants. The species is widespread in the Mediterranean area. From the Ukraine along the Black Sea, occasionally in Germany on sunny, dry slopes along valleys and rivers, in the French and Swiss Jura Mountains, Portugal and into Northern Africa and as far east as Iran. Variants are also found in Lebanon.
Habit	Slow growing. Forms a small and densely branched tree, tending to a large shrub in less favourable sites. Can reach 6-12 metres in height with an oval to rounded form.
Description	Leaves can be variable, but typically 3-5 cm long with three-blunt lobes, shiny dark green above, underside blue-green. Foliage typically thick, leathery (coriaceous), turning yellow in autumn. Branches are smooth (glabrous), reddish-brown to grey. Trunk and main branch bark grooved and corkier. Flowers are yellow-green and held in pendulous corymbs (flower cluster). Flowers appear simultaneously with new leaves. Fruit is a samara with many being unfertilised (parthenocarpic). It is usually abundant and can have a reddish-tinge to the samaras giving an ornamental characteristic.
Tolerances	Tolerant of dry conditions. Specimens in the Waite Arboretum in Adelaide indicates that <i>A. monspessulanum</i> is more drought tolerant than <i>A. campestre</i> , and this tree has survived Adelaide's dry climate without supplemental irrigation (after a two-year establishment period). Montpelier Maple adapts to most soil types but prefers calcareous soils (greater than 15% CaCO ₃ in the soil which are relatively widespread in the drier areas of the earth). Intolerant of saline and sodic soils. Grows in full sun to part shade. Typically a vigorous, healthy tree with no serious pest or disease problems.
Root space	Based on a mature size specimen of Montpelier Maple with a trunk diameter between 25cm to 35cm a tree would require approximately >12m ³ to 25m ³ root volume (Urban, 2008).
Availability	Occasional. Specialist nurseries. Would need to track down. Should become more common over time.
Uses & management	Its compact form and drought tolerance makes Montpelier Maple well-suited for streets, small, gardens and urban landscapes. Like the Hedge Maple, it responds well to pruning and can be easily hedged to form a screen. It is popular among bonsai enthusiasts. It should be used more in the urban landscape due to its and high tolerance levels and its ability to be pruned quite hard. Due to its parthenocarpy nature, Montpelier Maple doesn't pose a significant weed hazard.

Reference

van Gelderen, D. M., de Jong, P. C., and Oterdoom, H. J.
(1994) *Maples of the World*.

