

Bigleaf maple, big-leaf maple*Scientific:* Acer macrophyllum Pursh*Primary category:* Tree*Habitat:* Forests*Description (by Bosky Dell Natives):*

Our grand native maple reaches heights of 75-100 feet, with a spread of up to 50 feet. It is a beautiful deciduous broadleaved tree for large gardens and parks. Leaves are large (6-12"), with 3-5 lobes. Fall color is yellow; large, pendant, creamy yellow flower clusters emerge in mid-spring before the leaves.

Bigleaf maple seeds prolifically; seedlings sprout in many of our gardens, and as a result many Oregonians consider the tree common and invasive, though it is truly a majestic tree of great beauty and usefulness for wildlife. Bigleaf maple seed feeds songbirds; trees provide cover, nesting and perching sites; nectar is used by honeybees. Sun/part sun, regular water, well-drained soil.

Arthur Kruckeberg notes in Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest (University of Washington Press, 1996): "A word of caution for those who would attempt to garden beneath a huge specimen of big-leaf maple. Either from shade or by rapid moisture withdrawal in the summer, the soil beneath a mature tree can be inhospitable to growing even shade-tolerant ornamental shrubs or herbs.

By judicious selection of other natives like salal, Oregon grape, sword fern, and others in the native understory, the big trees can have their own ground-level gardens."

Images of Acer macrophyllumbing.com/images[See all images >](#)*Lewis and Clark's journal entries (by Bosky Dell Natives):*

Lewis described our large-leaved maple in his journal on December 1, 1805, from the mouth of the Columbia River, as "the ash with a remarkable large leaf." He documented the native vegetation on Sauvie Island in March: "there is a heavy growth of Cottonwood, ash, the large leafed ash [referring to big-leaf maple] and sweet willow on most parts of this island."

Clark noted his impressions of the Oregon scene in spring "vegetation is rapidly progressing. Sarvis berry, Sackacommis (kinnikinnick) and the large leafed ash is in blume."