

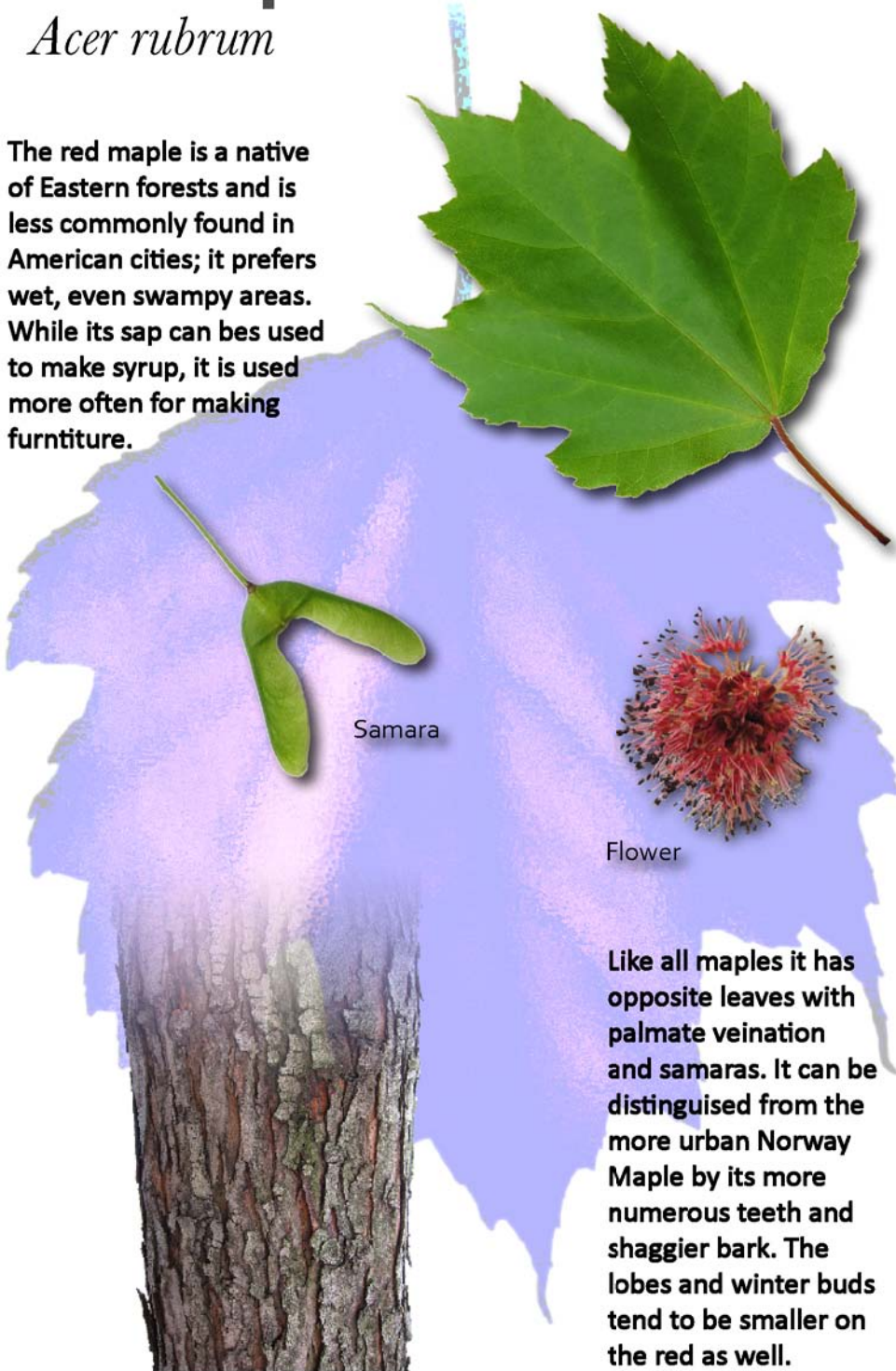
AN INCOMPLETE GUIDE TO
TREES OF ALBANY
SPRING & WINTER



Red Maple

Acer rubrum

The red maple is a native of Eastern forests and is less commonly found in American cities; it prefers wet, even swampy areas. While its sap can be used to make syrup, it is used more often for making furniture.



Samara

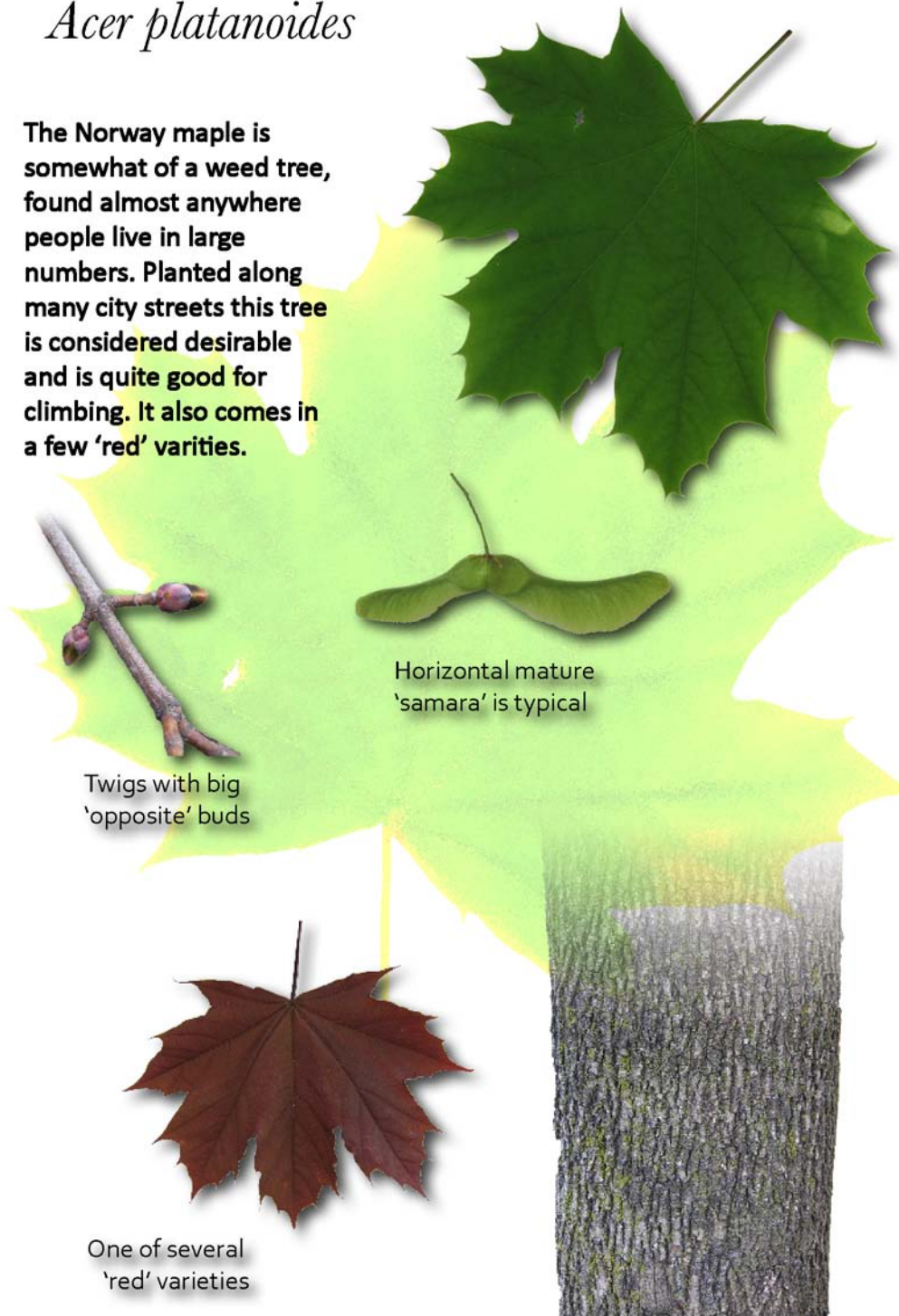
Flower

Like all maples it has opposite leaves with palmate venation and samaras. It can be distinguished from the more urban Norway Maple by its more numerous teeth and shaggier bark. The lobes and winter buds tend to be smaller on the red as well.

Norway Maple

Acer platanoides

The Norway maple is somewhat of a weed tree, found almost anywhere people live in large numbers. Planted along many city streets this tree is considered desirable and is quite good for climbing. It also comes in a few 'red' varieties.



Horizontal mature 'samara' is typical

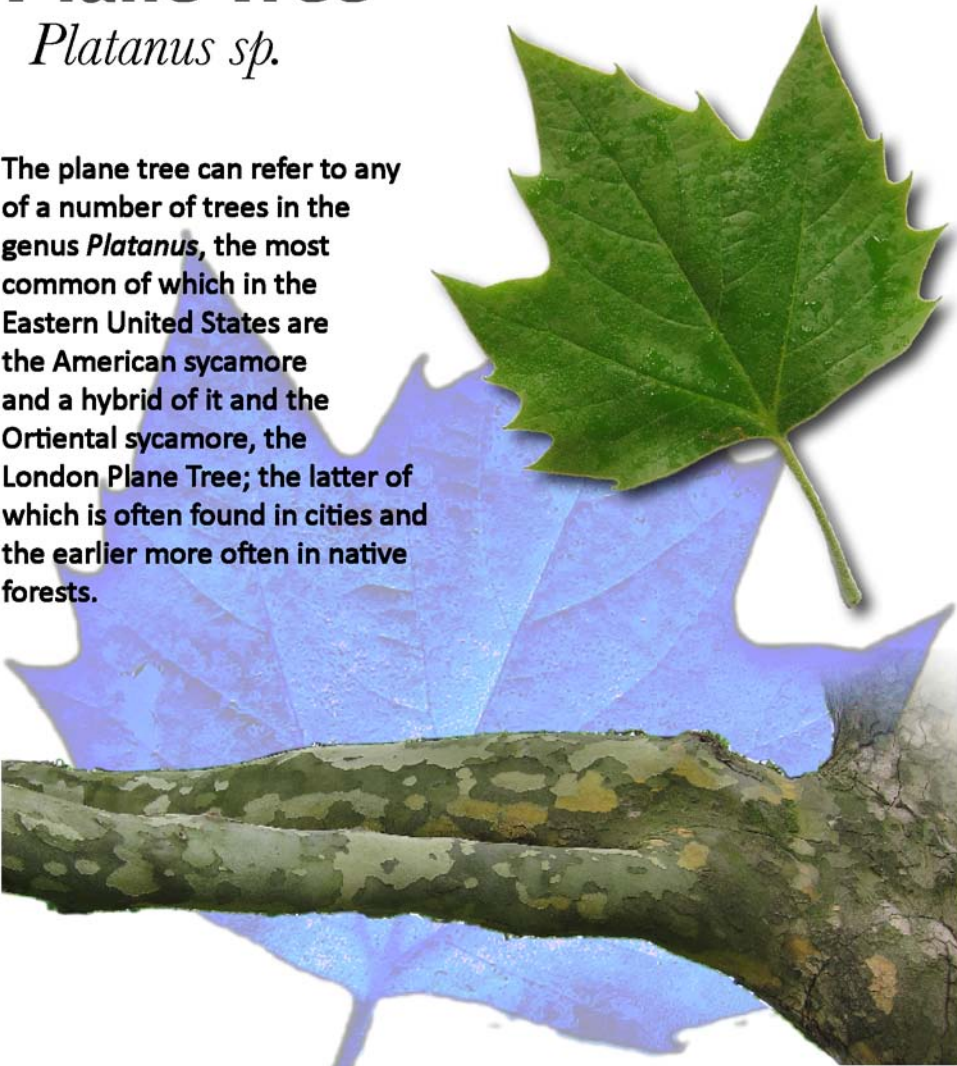
Twigs with big 'opposite' buds

One of several 'red' varieties

Plane Tree

Platanus sp.

The plane tree can refer to any of a number of trees in the genus *Platanus*, the most common of which in the Eastern United States are the American sycamore and a hybrid of it and the Oriental sycamore, the London Plane Tree; the latter of which is often found in cities and the earlier more often in native forests.



Compare: Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)



Plane trees are probably most famous for their highly distinguishable "camouflage" bark. Their leaves resemble somewhat maple leaves but they tend to have fewer teeth and smaller lobes. They produce a unique fruit.

Red Oak

Quercus rubra

The red oak is a majestic tree that will live for hundreds of years. Oaks have found places for themselves throughout the world and the red oak is one of the Northeast's most common. It used to be known by the species name '*borealis*', or 'of the North'.



Red oaks have pinnate leaf venation and bark with long, flat plates. They can be distinguished from white oaks by their pointed tips as opposed to the whites' rounded ones. Leaf margins vary but never extend more than halfway to the main rib, unlike those of the pin oak.

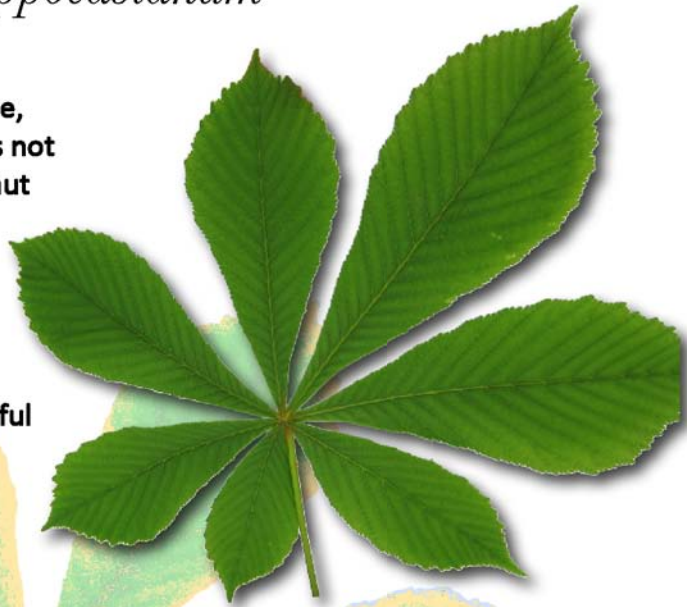
Compare: Pin Oak (*Q. palustris*)



Horse Chestnut

Aesculus hippocastanum

A world renowned tree, the horse chestnut is not related to the chestnut (*Castanea*), and in fact its nuts are poisonous, though not to horses. It has scraggly bark and produces beautiful cone flowers in the spring. It has a spiny nut shell with fewer spines than chestnuts.



Cone flower

Compare: Red Horse Chestnut (*A. x carnea*)



Honey Locust

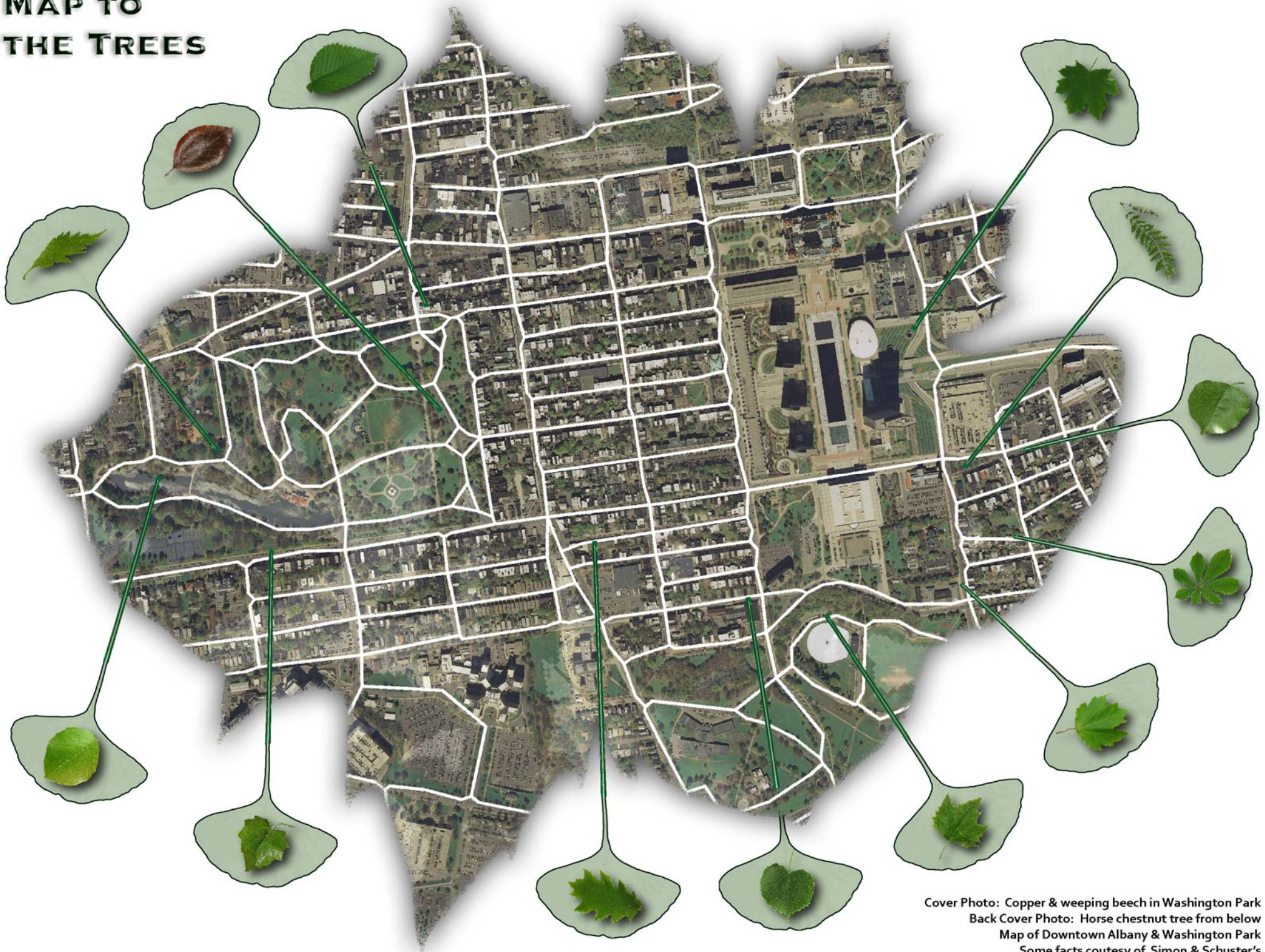
Gleditsia triacanthos

A thornless variety of the honey locust is quite common in many Eastern cities and is easy to identify as one of the only pinnately compound trees around. Leaves grow in bunches and are composed of many small leaflets, and are often yellow even during the growing season. By comparison the black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) has larger and fatter leaflets.



Honey locusts are popular in cities because of its tolerance of rough growing conditions as well as its quick growth in places such as new developments or reclaimed areas. It has often been used for posts since it rots slowly, and its thorns for nails in past times.

MAP TO THE TREES



Cover Photo: Copper & weeping beech in Washington Park
Back Cover Photo: Horse chestnut tree from below
Map of Downtown Albany & Washington Park
Some facts courtesy of Simon & Schuster's

European Beech

Fagus sylvatica

The European beech is a common tree in Eastern parks, and in fact several varieties exist, such as: weeping, copper and fern leaf. Many of these can be found in Washington Park.



Beech trees have smooth grey bark, the European with a base that can be described as an "elephant's foot". Leaves are simple and toothed, and buds have a distinct "cigar" shape. The American Beech has longer leaves with more pronounced teeth.

Winter branch



Compare: American Beech (*F. americana*)

var 'Fern Leaf'



Bough of var 'Weeping' (*pendula*)

Characteristic grey bark among rain soaked trunk



var 'Copper'



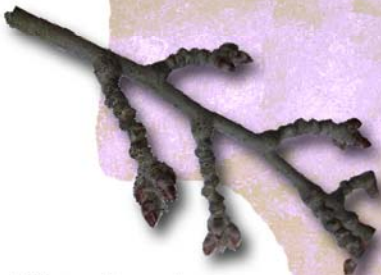
White Poplar

Populus alba

The white poplar is a rare treat, at least in the streets of Albany. An Old World tree in the poplar genus, which also includes aspens and cottonwoods, the name comes from the Roman *arbor populi*, the People's Tree, and *alba* for white.



Trunk under evening sunlight



Winter branch

What is unique about the white poplar is its black scaled white bark, though it can appear grey to grey-green in some circumstances. Like all poplars its leaves are toothed, the white having generally larger teeth than the rest. The white poplar can grow to 100 ft tall.

Elm

Ulmus sp.

Elms are world class trees and the American Elm used to crown the streets of American cities until the infamous 'Dutch Elm Disease' literally decimated its populations. Some large American specimens can still be found in parks in their full glory, and other species are now present as well.



Seeds & buds on a twig



Elms have rough bark with cord-like twists and their branches form large, curving, arching structures that dominate the sky in both vertical and horizontal directions. Leaves are double-toothed and have an uneven base. Wood is very hard to split and thus elms are not often used in wood craft or for firewood. They

should not be confused with Zelkvas which although in the same family as the elm do not have corded bark nor form the same elegant super structures with their branches; Zelkvas were planted in many cities to replace the disappearing American Elm.

Compare: *Zelkova sp.*



Linden

Tilia sp.



The linden may equal the Norway maple as the most common tree along the streets of Eastern cities. The genus includes several species, such as: small-leaf, broad-leaf, both from the Old World, and the American basswood. Simple trees with yellow flowers, you are likely to miss them walking down the street.



Winter branch



Flower and Bract

With false end buds and lateral buds of a mellow pink to red color radiating along twigs the linden can often be identified in winter's cold. In the warm season their distinctive bracts and uneven leaf base give them away.

Callery Pear

Pyrus calleryana



The Callery pear (of which the most popular cultivar is 'Bradford') may be third in frequency of appearance along Eastern city streets. Another tree that is easy to miss, in the spring you probably will not due to its bright white flowers and distinctive musky smell.



Winter branch

Compare: Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)



In the Bradford pear limbs are tight and sharply upward reaching, which sometimes leads these trees to 'explode' when they reach around 30 years of age. Winter buds are often fuzzy, and little miniature "pears" are often found dangling from their twigs into early spring.



An Incomplete Guide to Trees of Albany
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