

American sycamore *Platanaceae* *Platanus occidentalis* L. 
symbol: PLOC

vTree

Leaf: Alternate, simple, palmately veined, 4 to 8 inches wide, ovate in shape, with three to five lobes, margins coarsely toothed, petiole bases encircle and enclose the buds, veins may be pubescent below.

Flower: Species is monoecious; imperfect, both male and females are very small and appear in dense round clusters, typically a single cluster to a stalk, appearing with the leaves.

Fruit: A spherical multiple of achenes borne on a 3 to 6 inch stalk. Each seed is tiny, winged, and 1/2 inch long; maturing in November, disseminating in late winter.

Twig: Obviously zigzag, quite stout and orange-brown in color; leaf scar surrounds the bud and the stipule scar surrounds the twig; terminal bud is absent; lateral buds are reddish, resinous, with a single, cap-like scale.

Bark: Thin, mottled brown, green, tan and white; older stems are gray-brown and scaly. The most striking feature of this tree, often referred to as "camouflage" bark that readily exfoliates.

Form: A very massive tree with heavy, spreading branches with obviously zigzag twigs reaching up to and over 100 feet tall. In winter, the persistent fruits resemble Christmas tree ornaments.

Looks like: [London plane tree](#) - [California sycamore](#) - [Arizona sycamore](#)



Additional Range Information:
Platanus occidentalis is native to North America. Range may be expanded by planting. [See states reporting American sycamore.](#)

External Links:
[USDAFS Silvics of North America](#)
[USDAFS Additional Silvics](#)
[Landowner Factsheet](#)
[USDA Plants Database](#)
[Horticulture](#)

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