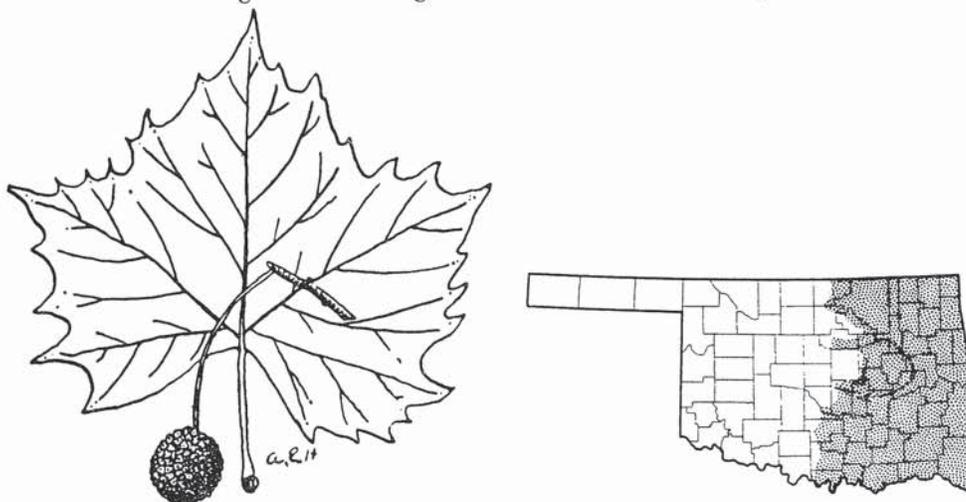


83. SYCAMORE

Platanus occidentalis L.

Large tree 60-80 ft (18-24 m) high with stout straight trunk 3 ft (0.9 m) in diameter, sometimes much thicker, and with broad irregular open crown of stout spreading, often crooked, branches. Twigs slender or slightly stout, slightly zigzag, orange brown, hairy when young, with rings at nodes. Buds conical, orange brown, hairless, covered by 1 shiny scale and hidden inside enlarged base of long leafstalk, which forms a ring leaf-scar; no end bud.



Leaves often in 2 rows, *broadly ovate* or rounded, 4-8 in (10-20 cm) long and wide, with 3 or 5 *shallow broad short-pointed lobes*, wavy edges with scattered large teeth, with 3 or 5 main veins from notched or straight base, *yellow green* and hairless above, beneath paler and becoming hairless except on veins, turning brown in autumn.

Flowers many, tiny, greenish, male and female in 1 or 2 separate ball-like clusters (heads) $\frac{1}{4}$ in (6 mm) in diameter, in spring with leaves.

Fruit (multiple) a *ball* (head), sometimes 2, 1 in (2.5 cm) in diameter, hanging on long stalk, composed of many narrow nutlets with *tufts of hairs* at base, maturing in autumn, separating in winter.

Bark *smoothish*, *whitish* and *mottled*, *peeling* in large thin flakes, shedding and exposing *patches of brown, green and gray*; bark at base of large trunks dark brown, rough, thick, deeply furrowed into broad scaly ridges.

Wood reddish brown with thick lighter or whitish sapwood, diffuse porous, fine-textured, with interlocked grain, moderately heavy (sp. gr. .46), moderately hard, moderately strong and stiff. Principal uses are furniture, boxes (especially food containers), barrels, mill-work, flooring, and special items such as butcher blocks and brush handles. Also pulpwood, particleboard, and wood fiberboard.

Common with willows and cottonwoods in wet soil along stream and lake banks and in flood plain forests, e. half of Okla. Widespread with other hardwoods on wet sites in e. half of U.S. Zone 4.

Sycamore is a shade tree and a parent of the popular hardy hybrid of city streets, London planetree, *Platanus* \times *acerifolia* (Ait.) Willd. This hybrid has the leaves with 3 or 5 long-pointed lobes halfway to base and with fruit of usually 2 bristly balls.