



Box Elder



The Box Elder in Australia

The Box Elder was introduced as an ornamental tree, being widely planted in parks, gardens and streets. The possible earliest records of it being naturalised in Australia are from riverbanks of the Nepean River in the Sydney Basin, from c.1959 onwards. Unfortunately, it has become an invasive weed, especially on riverbanks and in moist forests and disturbed areas in damp soils.



Indigenous Uses: The wood has been used for a variety of purposes by Native Americans to make bowls, dishes, drums, and pipe stems as well as to be made into charcoal, which is used in ceremonial painting and tattooing. It has also been used for several medicinal purposes, for example, a decoction of the inner bark was used as an emetic. And of course, there is the sap. This has been used to make syrup as well as using dry scrapings of the inner bark to keep as winter food, and boiling the inner bark until sugar crystallizes out of it. The sap was often mixed with that of the sugar maple to be drunk as a beverage.

Family: *Sapindaceae*

Genus: *Acer*

Botanic name: *Acer negundo*

Acer from the Latin means maple; *Negundo* – on the basis of its pinnate leaves

Also known as: Box Elder, Box Elder Maple, Ash-leaved Maple, Black Maple

The names "box elder" and "box elder maple" are based upon the similarity of its whitish wood to that of boxwood and the similarity of its pinnately compound leaves to those of some species of elder. Other common names are based upon this maple's similarity to ash, its preferred environment, its sugary sap, a description of its leaves and its binomial name.

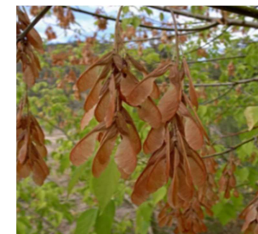
Origin: A species of maple native to North America

Habitat: It usually grows on moist sites along lakes and waterways, on floodplains, and in low-lying areas. The typical lifespan of a Box Elder is only 60 years. Under exceptionally favourable conditions, it may live to 100 years.

Description: The Box Elder is a small to medium deciduous tree that flowers and produces leaves in spring. Flowering usually occurs before leaf growth. Fruits persist on the plant until, or during, winter. This member of the maple family is often a multi-stemmed, deciduous tree to 20 m high. Bark light grey or grey-brown, becoming fissured or flaky with age; canopy open, irregular, broad.

The leaves are pinnate, most with three leaflets that are often lobed. The leaves are about 20 cm long and up to 15 cm wide, entirely green turning yellow before falling.

Flowers are greenish or yellowish, unisexual, lacking petals and disc; pedicels slender; male flowers clustered and pendent; females flowers in raceme-like inflorescences.



The fruits are paired samaras, 3–4 cm long; wing strongly veined, yellowish. Two samaras are fused together at their bases to form a V-shape and these fruits spin like propellers when they fall to the ground. These V-shaped fruiting bodies (made up of two linked winged fruits) that spin like propellers when they fall to the ground. Mass germination of seed occurs in spring, and this can form extensive carpets of seedlings.

Propagation and cultivation: *Acer negundo* tolerates frost, full sun, shade (once established), air pollution and flooding, as well as drought to some extent. Unlike most other maples, *A. negundo* is fully dioecious and both a male and female tree are needed for reproduction to occur.

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Sources:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acer_negundo
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<https://profiles.ala.org.au/opus/weeds-australia/profile/Acer%20negundo>