



Platanus orientalis var. *digitata* Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree¹

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INTRODUCTION

This deciduous tree is a selection from one of the parents of the popular London Planetree (*Platanus x acerifolia*) and has more deeply lobed leaves than the species (Fig. 1). The leaves roll up on the ground and do not blow around in the fall like other *Platanus* spp. Leaves are almost silver maple-like. Capable of reaching perhaps 80 feet in height, the Oriental Planetree has very strong branches and was quite useful as a shade tree until disease struck. The wood of *Platanus* spp. is so tough, dense and hard it is often used for butcher's blocks and furniture. The springtime flowers are followed by fruits which are found on stalks in groups of three to six. The attractive bark is cream colored and flaky and very striking in the winter.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Platanus orientalis* var. *digitata*
Pronunciation: PLAT-uh-nus or-ee-en-TAY-liss
variety dij-ih-TAY-tuh
Common name(s): Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree
Family: *Platanaceae*
USDA hardiness zones: 7 through 9A (Fig. 2)
Origin: not native to North America
Uses: shade tree; no proven urban tolerance
Availability: grown in small quantities by a small number of nurseries

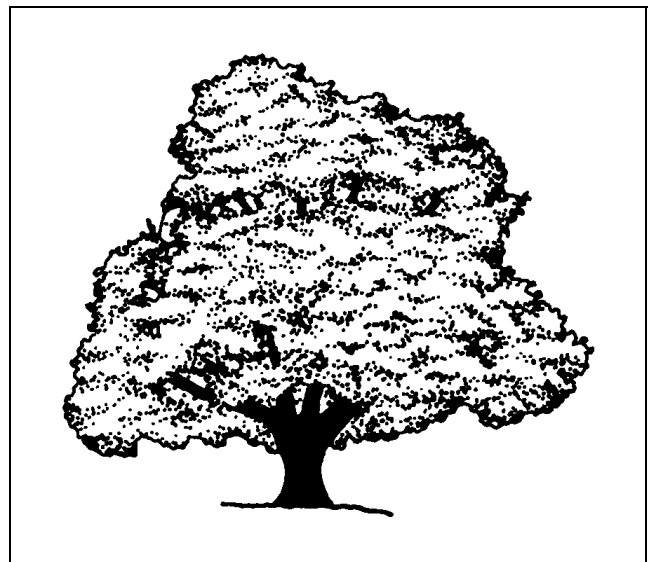


Figure 1. Mature Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 50 to 80 feet
Spread: 40 to 70 feet
Crown uniformity: symmetrical canopy with a regular (or smooth) outline, and individuals have more or less identical crown forms
Crown shape: round; pyramidal
Crown density: moderate
Growth rate: fast
Texture: coarse

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Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

- Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- Leaf type:** simple
- Leaf margin:** lobed; incised; serrate
- Leaf shape:** ovate
- Leaf venation:** palmate
- Leaf type and persistence:** deciduous
- Leaf blade length:** 4 to 8 inches
- Leaf color:** green
- Fall color:** yellow
- Fall characteristic:** not showy

Flower

- Flower characteristics:** inconspicuous and not showy; spring flowering

Fruit

- Fruit shape:** round
- Fruit length:** .5 to 1 inch
- Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- Fruit color:** brown; tan
- Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; no significant litter problem; showy

Trunk and Branches

- Trunk/bark/branches:** droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; showy trunk; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns
- Pruning requirement:** needs little pruning to develop a strong structure
- Breakage:** resistant
- Current year twig color:** brown
- Current year twig thickness:** medium

Culture

- Light requirement:** tree grows in part shade/part sun; tree grows in full sun
- Soil tolerances:** clay; loam; sand; acidic; occasionally wet; alkaline; well-drained
- Drought tolerance:** high

Other

- Roots:** surface roots can lift sidewalks or interfere with mowing
- Winter interest:** tree has winter interest due to unusual form, nice persistent fruits, showy winter

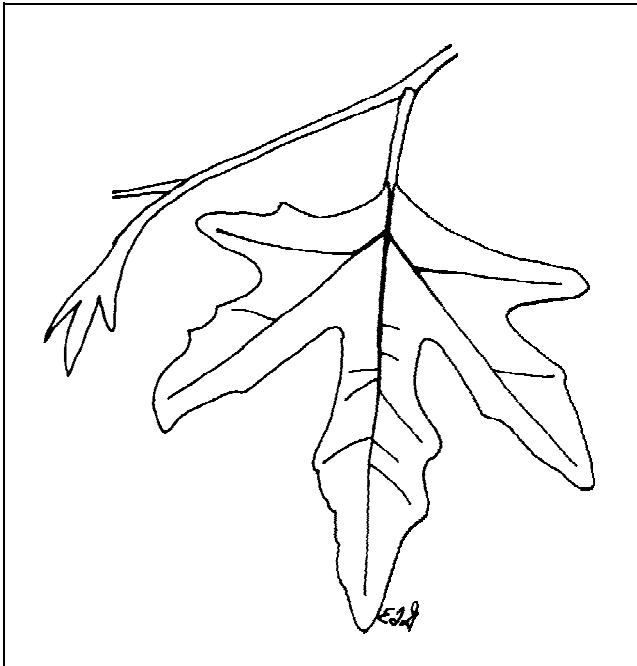


Figure 3. Foliage of Cut-Leaf Oriental Planetree.

Diseases

The cultivar probably will be subjected to the same disease problems as the species.

trunk, or winter flowers

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: not known to be susceptible

Pest resistance: very sensitive to one or more pests or diseases which can affect tree health or aesthetics

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Naturally found along streams and floodplain riverbeds, Oriental Planetree should be grown in full sun or partial shade on moist soils. It grows on acid or alkaline soil, wet or dry. Leaves may drop early in dry years. Should be grown primarily for its resistance to anthracnose disease which can be devastating to American Sycamore, but it is rare in the trade.

Propagation is by cuttings which root easily but they transpire fast so they need lots of mist in the first week after being inserted into the growing media.

Pests

Pests are probably lace bug, and others.