Weed of the Week

Norway Maple

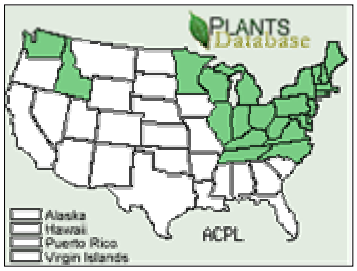
Acer platanoides L.

Native Origin: Europe and Western Asia

Description: Norway Maples are deciduous trees growing 12-18m (40-60ft.) in height, but can reach heights of 30m (100ft.) with dense foliage, broad-rounded crown, and stout stems. The bark of the tree is grayish and shallowly grooved or furrowed. Palmate leaves are opposite, simple, and 10-18 cm across with 5 to 7 sharply pointed lobes. The glossy dark green leaves develop into yellow fall foliage. Leaves often have hairs in axils of veins and a milky sap can be observed when petiole is removed. In spring (April and May), showy clusters of flowers develop before leaves open. The yellow or greenish-yellow flowers are approximately 8 mm in diameter. Fruits mature during summer into wide-spreading wings that look like helicopter blades which split down the middle, releasing each half to the wind. Norway maple can be confused with many maple species, especially sugar maple (*Acer saccharum*). Milky white sap that oozes out of leaf veins and stalks when broken can help distinguish them from native maples. Also bud tips of sugar maple are pointy and sharp to the touch, while those of Norway maple are more rounded and not sharp to the touch.

Habitat: Norway maple prefers full sun, withstands hot dry conditions and tolerates ozone and sulfur dioxide air pollution. It is adapted to extremes in soils (sand, clay, acid, calcareous) and hardy to USDA Zone 4. It can be found in early and late succession forest, forested wetlands, open disturbed areas, roadsides, vacant lots, yards and gardens.

Distribution Map: Norway maple is found in the Northeast from Maine to Minnesota and South from Tennessee to North Carolina. It is also found in the states of Washington and Idaho. It is recognized as an invasive plant in many of these states.



Ecological Threat: *Acer platanoides* produces large quantities of seeds which can germinate rapidly and crowd out native species. Norway Maples have been found in woodlands near cities, especially in the northeastern U.S. It has escaped cultivation and invades forests, fields, and other natural habitats. The species can be locally dominant in forest stands, create dense shade, and displace native trees, shrubs and herbs.

Management & Control: Don't plant Norway maple.

Manual control – Pull seedlings when soil is moist. Dig out larger plants, including the root systems. Cut down large tree. Grind out the stump, or clip off re-growth. Girdle tree by cutting through the bark and growing layer (cambium) all around the trunk. Girdling is most effective in spring.

Chemical control – Cut down, and paint the cut stem or stump with Gylphosate (or triclopyr). Clip off re-growth or paint with glyphosate. Follow label directions.

References: www.invasive.org, http://oregonstate.edu, http://plants.usda.gov, Invasive Plant Atlas of New England http://webapps.lib.uconn.edu/ipane, www.mdflora.org/publications/invasives, www.hort.uconn.edu/cipwg/art_pubs/docs/norway_maple.pdf, Plant Invaders of Mid-Atlantic Natural Areas, NPS & USFWS, p. 52-53